THE UNIVERSITY
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CERAMICS AND REGIONALITY IN THE HIGHLANDS AND NORTHERN ISLES OF SCOTLAND, 2500-1800 BC

VOL I OF II

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This project is dedicated to the following people

Zach Mason (1992-2014)

Prof. Magdelana Midgley (1952-2014)

who helped get this project started and provided much valued support and encouragement

And finally, to the mother-in-law whom I never got to meet

Hermijn Hofdijk (1948-1997)

ABSTRACT

Ceramics and regionality in the Highlands and Northern Isles of Scotland, 2500-1800 BC

"*Scepticism is as much the result of knowledge, as knowledge is of scepticism*"

Rev. T.A. Buckley (1899)

This thesis considers the nature of pottery and its wider roles in the Highlands and Northern Isles of Scotland from 2500-1800 BC. The period under study represents a key moment in British prehistory with the introduction of metallurgy and wide-ranging changes in society. Since the inception of early Bronze Age studies pottery has played an important role in examinations of identity and chronology. As identified by several scholars there has been a recurrent emphasis on a select number of interpretive themes and regions such as Wessex and Aberdeenshire. This has marginalised certain areas creating an imbalance in our understanding of the tempo and dynamics of change during the period. Recent reviews have begun to address this issue, highlighting the importance of regional studies to our overall understanding of change in the later 3rd millennium.

At present, there is no synthesis of ceramic material from the Highlands and Northern Isles that considers the diverse array of pot types and the contexts in which they are found. In response, this thesis aims to characterise the range of ceramic types, their contexts and associations. Through the course of this thesis a series of detailed regional datasets and interpretations are constructed. This is coupled with a review of the longer-term ceramic sequence across the study area, situating the advent of novel pot types within the existing ceramic repertoire.

Secondly, this thesis examines the dynamics of ceramic similarity and difference, and what this reveals about regional preferences and identities alongside broader intra and supra regional networks. Drawing on recent relational approaches this thesis explores how ceramic categories came into being, persisted and dissipated at a range of scales. These approaches highlight the fluid nature of change and the need to consider pots as elements of wider assemblages. Through this examination it is possible to detect distinct trends in regional ceramics, allowing for the construction of narratives that extend beyond defining visual similarities, contributing towards understanding the wider significance of similarity and difference.

Declaration

This is to certify that that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Note on chronology:

The period under study has been described using a range of terms, including recent debates over the notion of a British Chalcolithic (*cf.* Allen *et al.* 2012). Whilst providing a convenient shorthand, period labels can serve to obstruct a more fluid understanding of the past. Importantly the ceramic types and processes discussed in this thesis frequently cut across these periods. Instead calendar years are preferred in this thesis.

Acknowledgements

This project has been a steep learning curve, one that was made a little less steep by the generous support of various individuals throughout the course of it. The following is by no means a complete list and any omissions I apologise.

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Map Sources:

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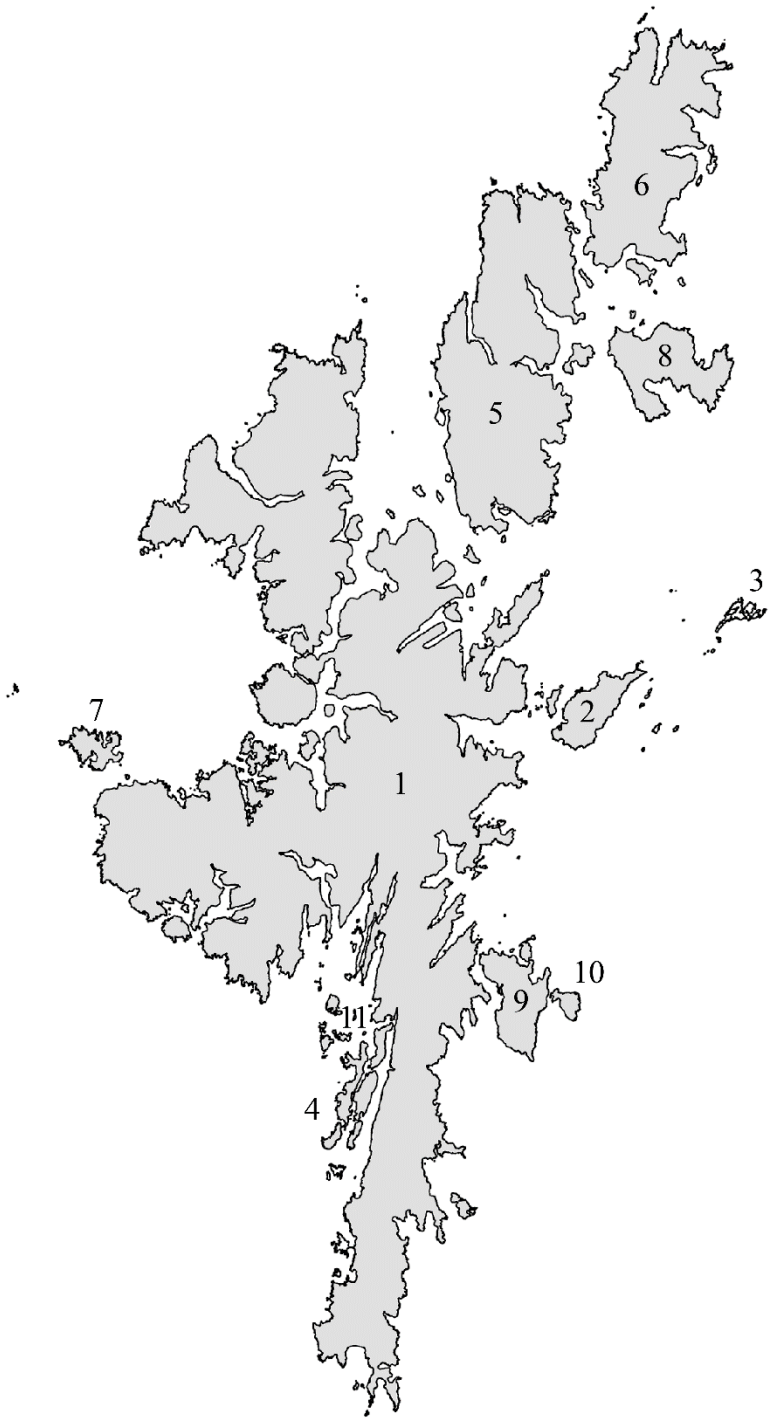


Figure I: *Principle islands of the Shetland Isle's:*

1. Mainland
2.Whalsay
3. Out Skerries
4. Burra
9.Bressay
11. Trondra
5.Yell
6. Unst
7. Papa Stour
8. Fetlar
10. Noss

Figure II: *Principle islands of the Orkney Isle's:*

1. Papa Westray
2. Westray
3.North Ronaldsay
4. Sanday
5. Eday
6. Rousay
7.Egilsay
8. Wyre
9. Stronsay
10. Shapinsay
11. Mainland
12. Hoy
13. Flotta
14. South Ronaldsay

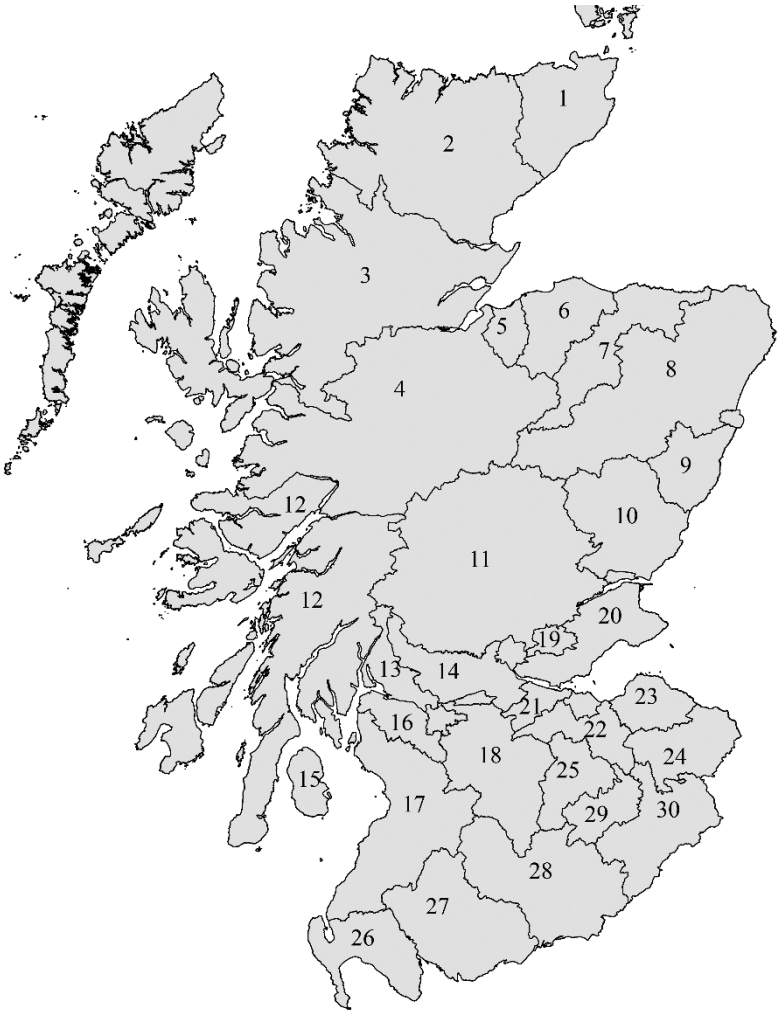


Figure III: *Principal historic (pre 1975) counties of mainland Scotland:*

1. Caithness
2.Sutherland
3.Ross & Cromarty
4.Inverness-shire
5.Nairn
6. Moray
7. Banff
8. Aberdeen
9.Kincardine
10. Angus
11. Perth
12. Argyll
13. Dunbarton
14. Stirling
15. Bute
16. Renfrew
17. Ayr
18. Lanark
19. Kinross
20. Fife
21. West Lothian
22. Midlothian
23. East Lothian
24.Berwick
25.Peebles
26. Wigtown
27. Kirkcudbright
28. Dumfries
29.Selkirk
30. Roxburgh

PART I:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS & THEMES

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION: PROJECT AIMS & APPROACHES

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is an investigation into the nature of ceramic types and their roles in the Highlands and Northern Isles of Scotland from 2500-1800 BC. The period under study is characterised by widespread changes in burial practices and material culture. Artefactual changes include the introduction of metallurgy, new forms of personal ornamentation and a suite of distinctive pottery types. Notable among these new pottery types are Beakers and Food Vessels (Fig. 1.1). Beakers encompass a range of sinuous vessels in use *c.*2450-1900 BC. In contrast, Food Vessels encompass a diverse array bowls and vases (Figs. 1.1, 2.8 & 2.9). In many parts of Britain, Food Vessels succeed Beakers from *c.* 2200 BC with notable concentrations in Ireland and the north of Britain. These new vessels diverge from previous types, both in terms of morphology and their contexts of use. Both are closely associated with the emergence of distinctive burial practices, including single inhumations and cremations (see **Chapter 2**). The increased uptake of cremation from 1900 BC sees the development of novel ceramic types employed as containers or covers for human remains. Among these are distinctive Cordoned and Collared Urns[1] (Fig. 1.1) alongside various regional types (Sheridan 2003a).

Despite the sense of homogeneity created by catch all labels such as 'Beaker', these ceramic types from the outset encompass a range of regional varieties (Gibson, C. 2013; Needham 2005; Downes 2012: 23; Sheridan 2012b; Fowler 2013a). This includes hybrids that deviate from defined types or incorporate aspects of different ceramic traditions. These regional types have often posed a challenge to typological approaches, leading to recurrent debates around definition and the relationships between different ceramic traditions (Vander Linden 2013). Variation extends beyond morphology into the wider contextual associations of each vessel. This is observed in burial practices where a range of similarities and differences can be observed. At a national level a high degree of uniformity can be observed, including the use of a ceramic vessel and recurrent patterns of orientation and setting (*e.g.* Shepherd, A. 1989,

[1] *These are two of a series of 'cinerary urns' that emerge in the later 3rd and early 2nd millennium. Other varieties include Encrusted Urns and Food Vessel Urns (see* ***Section 2.4****). The term 'urn' itself describes the role of the vessel as a container either for cremated remains or for storage (Longworth 1961: 263; Waddell 1975: 21)*

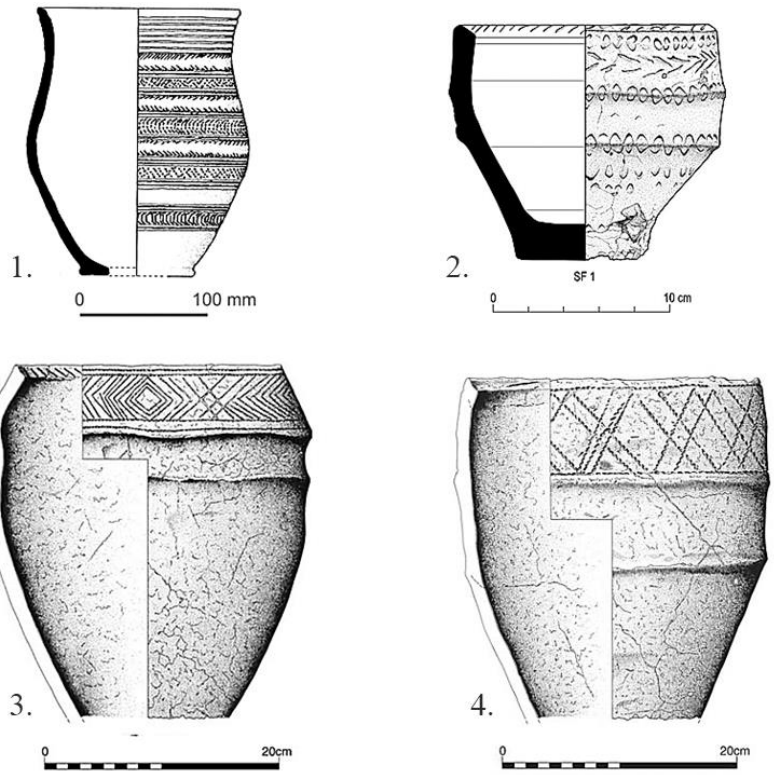


Figure 1.1: *Examples of the four principal ceramic traditions recorded from Britain and Ireland 2500-1800 BC*

Key: ***1.*** *Beaker* ***2.*** *Food Vessel* ***3.*** *Collared Urn* ***4.*** *Cordoned Urn*

1. *Holm Mains Farm (SH31), Inverness-shire (H.A Ltd. 2007)* ***2.*** *Sannox, Bute (Arabaolaza 2014: Figure 7)* ***3.,4.*** *Skilmafilly, Aberdeenshire (Johnson, M. & Cameron 2012: Illus. 7)*

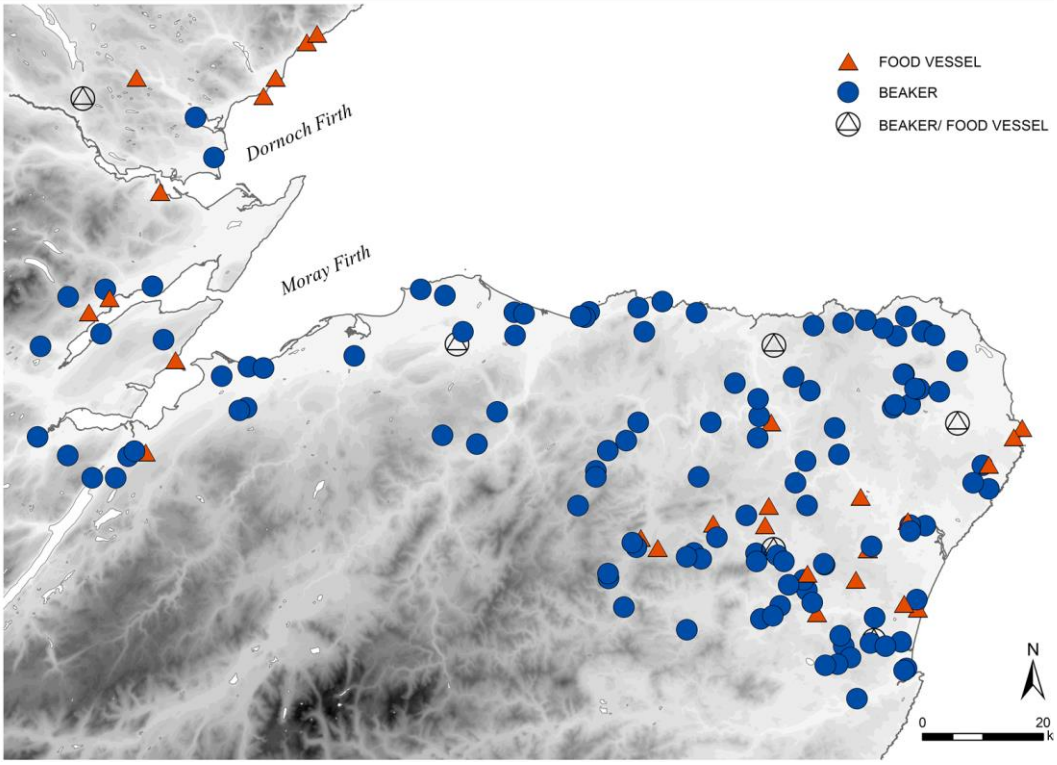


Figure 1.2: *Beaker and Food Vessel distribution in the Moray Firth*

2012). At a regional level, however, distinctions in body posture, burial setting and associated grave goods occur, suggesting a range of regional categories of burial drawing on a wider body of ideas (*e.g.* Fowler & Wilkin 2016; Carlin 2011) (see **Section 2.3**).

Investigation of regional aspects has been sporadic, with analyses predominantly focused on macro scale questions alongside problems of definition and typology (Vander Linden 2013; Fowler 2013a). This has included a recurrent emphasis on the Continental origins of Beakers and the role of mobility in their initial distribution (Abercromby 1912: Chapter VI; Clarke, D.L. 1970: 63-6, 78-81; Needham 2005: 178). This has led to a persistent focus on the widespread nature of changes, emphasising similarities over differences (Vander Linden 2013: 78). Within these narratives, artefacts play a key role, acting as ciphers or markers, serving to connect and measure the active involvement of regions in the wider networks of the late 3rd millennium BC (Jones, A. 2012: 189; Downes & Richards, C. 2000: 159). This focus on mapping types neglects the active process by which categories of pottery emerged and were stabilised (Van Oyen 2015: 63 see also Sørensen 2015). Importantly, this includes understanding the different ways similar vessels were employed to create a range of categories. Moreover, this approach often marginalises regions with little or no diagnostic material – creating distinct heartlands which predominate narratives (Jones, A. 2011: 2, 2012: 189). In Scotland, the northeast[2] has dominated narratives of the period, owing to its high number of Beakers and Food Vessels (Fig. 1.2). As highlighted in the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (Sc.A.R.F)[3] there is a critical need to further develop an understanding of the dynamics and tempo of change in 'remote' parts of Scotland beyond the northeast (Downes 2012: 21; Clarke, D.V. 2004: 46). This includes the Highlands and Northern Isles of Scotland, which in contrast to northeast Scotland (Downes 2012: 20-6).

The Northern Isles - comprising the Orkney Isles, Shetland Isles and Fair Isle (Fig. I) – are frequently absent from narratives of the later 3rd millennium BC (*ibid*: 23-4; Sheridan 2013). Situated 16km off the north coast of Scotland, the Orkney Isles comprise around seventy islands, of which around twenty are currently inhabited (Fig. II). The apparent dearth of finds in the Orkney Isles, in comparison to the earlier 3rd millennium BC, has led to notions of the region as isolated and in recession (Ritchie, A. 1995: 86; Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1989: 94; Downes & Richards, C. 2000). This decline has frequently been linked to the emergence of Beakers in other parts of Britain (*e.g.* Card *et al.* 2017: 40). Until recently, the primary

[2] *This includes the counties of Aberdeenshire and Moray (Shepherd, I. 1986; Curtis & Wilkin 2012: 237).*
[3] *Available at http://www.scottishheritagehub.com*

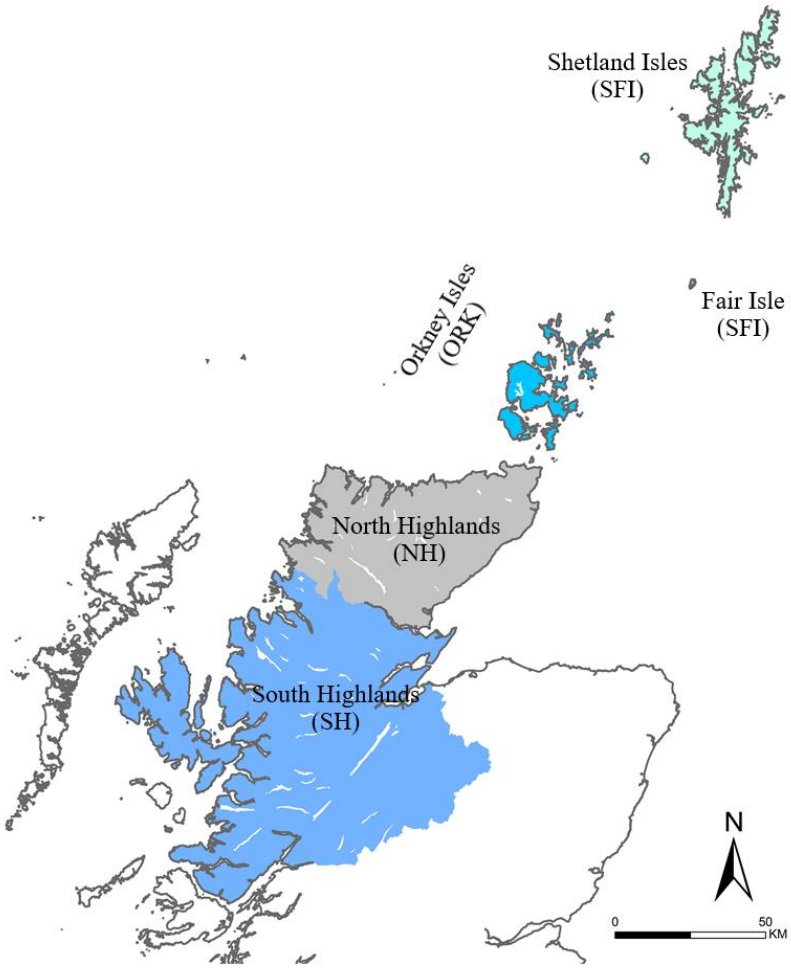


Figure 1.3: *The study area (for detailed maps see Figs. I, II & III)*

evidence for the later 3rd millennium BC in the Orkney Isles comprised fragments of Beakers and Food Vessels alongside barbed and tanged arrowheads (Mason 2011: 5-9). Recent excavations have provided further evidence for later activity (*cf.* Richards, C. & Jones, R. 2016) and regional ceramic types (Jones, A. 2012; Jones, A. *et al.* 2016). These demonstrate elements of both internal and external ideas (Mason 2011: 38-40; Jones, A. 2007: 139, 2012: Chp. 5). Despite these discoveries, the long-term ceramic sequence across the 3rd millennium BC is unclear, and a synthetic overview of old and new discoveries is needed (Downes & Gibson, J. 2013; Downes 2012: 20; Mason 2011).

Situated 80km northeast of Orkney, the Shetland Isles comprise over one hundred islands (Fig. I). The landscape of Shetland is replete with the remains of field systems and stone-built structures, assigned varyingly to the Neolithic, Bronze Age or Iron Age (Sheridan 2012a, 2013; Turner, V. 1998; Fojut 2006; Hunter, J. 1996; Calder 1952, 1958). In most cases, these

display successive phases of occupation with later activity damaging or destroying earlier phases (Downes & Lamb 2000a; Fojut 1999: 11). The jumbled and indeterminate nature of stratigraphy at these sites makes relative dating difficult. Coupled with the highly variable nature of pottery on a site to site basis, this has inhibited the development of a typo-chronological sequence for the region. Consequently, relative dating of sites and artefacts based on pottery alone is problematic (*cf.* Sheridan 2012a, 2013). Pottery from Shetland demonstrates a mix of regional styles, including aspects of form and decoration associated with Beakers (Sheridan 2012a; Gibson, A. 1982, 1984). The dating and relation of these elements to the overall ceramic sequence is unclear, with arguments tending to rely on external parallels (Sheridan 2013). Problems of chronology have been exacerbated by the lack of high quality radiocarbon dates. Several sites have recently been dated or re-dated (see **Apps. B3** & **F1**), but the relationship between these dates and the pottery is hard to determine given the poor stratigraphy of the sites. As such, the overall ceramic sequence for the 3rd millennium BC remains unclear. Fair Isle, situated between the Orkney Isles and Shetland (Fig. I), has seen limited study, except for several field surveys during the 1980s and a handful of excavations in the 19th century and mid-20th century[4] (for an overview see Hunter, J. 1996). There are few recorded finds of pottery except for several poorly documented finds from cemetery sites (Hunter, J. 1996: 77-85). The overall chronology of the island and relation to Shetland and Orkney is unclear at present, but there is clear evidence for contact and exchange between the two regions across the 3rd millennium BC, emphasising the importance of maritime contacts across the North Sea and the western seaways (Cunliffe 2003; Garrow & Sturt 2017; Van de Noort 2011)

The Highlands, comprising the modern Highland council area, comprises the historic counties[5] of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty, Nairnshire and Inverness-shire (including Skye) (Fig. III)[6]. The region includes the Morvern area, north of Mull in Argyll, which became part of the Highland council area in 1975. Because of this the sites from Ardnamurchan, originally part of the historic county of Argyll[7] are included in this thesis. Sutherland comprises a rugged inland upper zone bordered by flat coastal strips. In contrast, the landscape of Caithness is relatively open and flat. Nairn and Inverness encompass low-lying areas bordered by the coast,

*[4] This includes excavation of a cemetery on the South Harbour road by Anderson (1883: 73) (see **Section 6.3.1**) and surveys undertaken by Calder (1962,1965)*
[5] These counties were in existence until 1975, following which they were merged to create the Highland council area
*[6] The historic county of Inverness excludes the districts of Barra, Harris, North and South Uist, these areas are instead counted as part of the Hebrides, which is not included in this study. Aspects of the Hebrides are discussed in **Chapter 2**.*
[7] These sites are identified in text by reference, as with other sites to their historic county

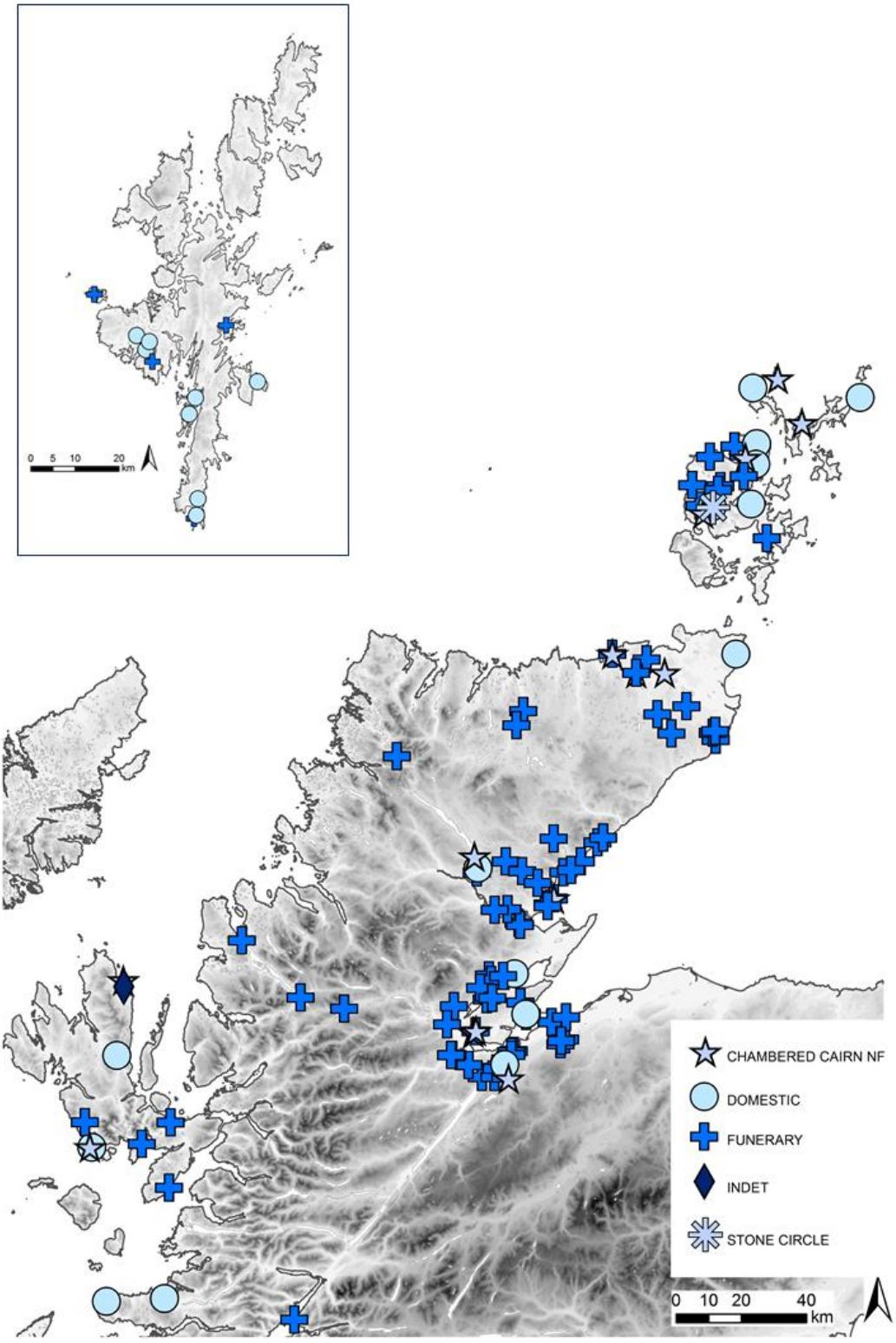


Figure 1.4: *Distribution of principal sites recorded from the study area (see Table 1.1 for definition of site types, see* ***App. A*** *for list of principle sites)*

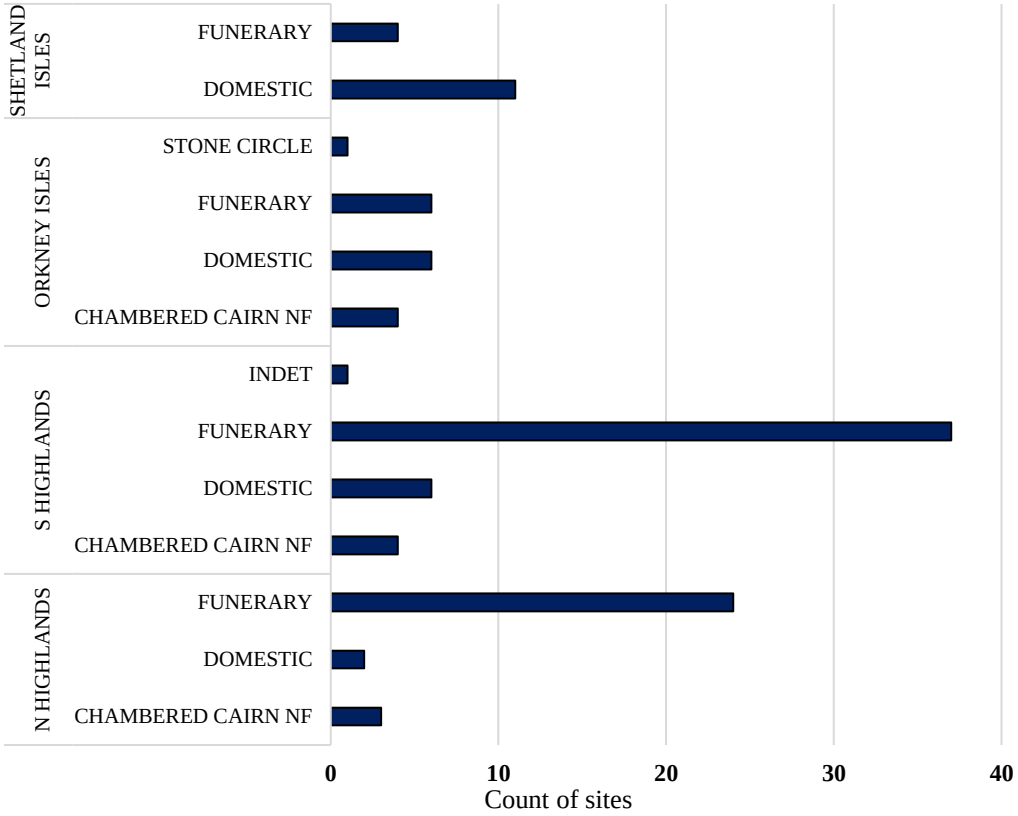


Figure 1.5: *Site types by region* (*see Table 1.1 for definition of site types)*

whilst Ross and Cromarty region is defined by a mountainous landscape, flanked by narrow coastal strips to the east and west. Lying off the west coast of Ross and Cromarty is the region of Skye and Lochalsh. Skye is the second largest Scottish island, with a coastline defined by bays and peninsulas. The inland areas comprise a range of hills and mountains. The Lochalsh area includes the Ardnamurchan peninsula where sherds of Beakers have been recovered from sand dunes (Lethbridge 1925, 1927; Ritchie, J.N.G. 1973; Gibson, A. 1982: 236) (**Section 9.2**). In Sutherland and Caithness Beakers and Food Vessels are common, occurring alongside a plethora of regional types. As in the Northern Isles, these are recorded from a host of different contexts, including chambered cairns and sand dunes (Gibson, A. 1982; Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: 65-67; Heald & Barber 2015: Chp.4; Wilkin 2016) (Figs. 1.4 & 1.5). Funerary finds are frequent, accounting for 84% of the recorded finds from the North Highlands (Fig. 1.5). In contrast, only two settlement sites with late 3rd millennium pottery were recorded as part of this project (Fig. 1.5).

To the south in Inverness and Nairn, finds from funerary contexts have formed the focus of research (*i.e.* Curtis & Wilkin 2012: 246). Around twenty-four Beakers are recorded from funerary contexts in Inverness and Nairn (Figs. 1,4 & 1.5). This total excludes finds for which

no direct provenance could be assigned (see **Apps. C3** & **D3**). Traditionally, these have been linked to the wider distribution of Beakers in northeast Scotland (*e.g.* Shepherd, I. 1986; Curtis & Wilkin 2012) (Fig. 1.2). Other ceramic types in the region, including Food Vessels and regional varieties of pottery, have seen less study, creating a bias towards Beaker pottery and associated material culture in narratives of the region. In recent years, several domestic sites have been excavated, presenting an opportunity to develop a more integrated analysis (*e.g.* Murray, R. 2008; Peteranna 2011a; Suddaby 2013).

In summary, current understanding of pottery and its wider roles in the study area is uneven. At present, the study area lacks a synthesis of the diverse array of pot types and the contexts in which they are found (Downes 2012: 24). There are problems around the sequencing and definition of ceramic types, notably in Orkney and Shetland. In other parts of the study area there is a clear bias towards funerary sites, which in the case of the Moray Firth has allowed it to be connected to wider 'Beaker networks'. Currently, the relationship between these finds and domestic sites is unclear, and similar problems exist around the understanding of the interrelationship of different vessel types. There is a clear need for an integrated analysis of the diverse material from the region, incorporating both domestic and non-domestic pottery. This analysis needs to include a consideration of long-term processes of change, situating new pot types within the context of preceding types and their associated practices in use during the earlier 3rd millennium BC. In the following section I will outline the key research questions, followed by the methodology employed in the project.

1.2 Research Questions & Methods

1.2.1 Research Aims & Questions

In response to the defined research gaps this thesis aims to:

1. Define the range and principal features of ceramic types, their contexts and associations, from the study area from 2500-1800 BC.
2. Examine the dynamics of ceramic similarity and difference, and what this reveals about regional preferences and identities alongside broader intra and supra-regional networks from 2500-1800 BC.

Underlying these aims are four specific research questions:

1. What are the key characteristics of pottery in terms of form, fabric and decoration?

2. How were pots categorised through use and are there consistent patterns of associations in funerary, domestic and other contexts?
3. What are the key intra-regional chronological and typological relationships between these ceramic types?
4. Do changes in the ceramic record reflect on long term or short-term processes?

1.2.2 Objectives

The defined research questions will be examined by:

1. Analysing ceramic material from across the study area. This critical review examines a variety of ceramic types, extending beyond the four principal ceramic types (Beakers, Food Vessels, Collared Urns and Cordoned Urns) building an integrated view of the interrelationships of different ceramic types.
2. Examining contexts of deposition and patterns of association, exploring the wider assemblages in which pots were deployed. This involves recording patterns of associations and depositions including the nature of burials.
3. Examining available chronological evidence, including available radiocarbon dates, situating change within the context of the earlier 3rd millennium BC, exploring notions of short and long-term processes.
4. Constructing a relational framework to develop a fluid narrative that considers the active roles of material culture at a range of scales.
5. Critiquing the chronology of types to understand the nature of change and the temporal relationship of different pot types.

1.3 Methodological Approaches

1.3.1 Site Identification & Recording

The study area is divided into four regions: Orkney (ORK), Shetland and Fair Isle (SFI), South Highlands (SH) and North Highlands (NH) (Fig. 1.3). The North Highlands encompasses the historic counties of Caithness and Sutherland (Fig. III). The South Highlands covers the regions of Nairn, Inverness, Ross and Cromarty and Skye and Lochaber (Fig. III). These

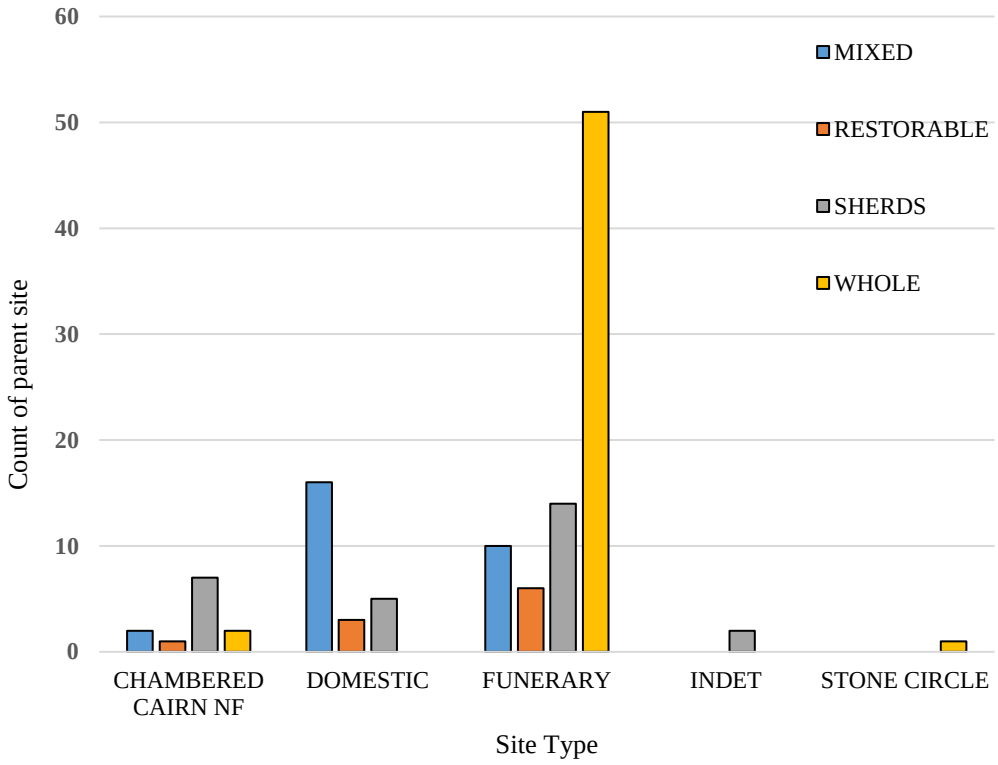


Figure 1.6: *Condition of pottery by site type (see Table 1.1 for definition of site types)*

Key: ***Whole.*** *Intact vessel recovered,* ***Restorable.*** *Incomplete, but enough remains to reconstruct profile,* ***Sherds.*** *Fragmentary, reconstruction tentative or not possible* ***Mixed.*** *Assemblage includes sherds, whole vessels and restorable examples*

historic counties were amalgamated in 1975, creating the modern local government area of the Highlands. For ease of division the historic counties are retained, allowing for a more accurate placing of sites in text (Figs. I, II & III). Due to constraints of time and space the Hebrides is not discussed in detail but is drawn on to provide comparative domestic material (see **Section 2.5**). The region has benefited recently from several publications including the results of the excavations and surveys undertaken as part of the SEARCH programme[8] (Parker Pearson & Zvelebil 2014; Parker Pearson 2012). Information for each region is summarised in a supplementary appendix providing a catalogue of sites, pottery, associated artefacts and osteological information (**Apps. B, C, D** & **E**)[9]. Each site is assigned an individual code in the appendices defined by region (SFI, ORK, NH or SH) and the catalogue number (*e.g.* ORK1 = Barnhouse, Stones of Odin). Each entry details the site type, location, gird reference (where

[8] *The SEARCH (Sheffield Environmental and Archaeological Research Campaign) programme started in 1987, examining a wide number of sites in the Outer Hebrides (Parker Pearson & Smith 2014: 1)*
[9] *The database is included on* ***CD1***

applicable), the CANMORE[10] inventory number (where applicable), and relevant references. Where sites have been reassessed as part of this project this is noted.

In total, 124 sites were examined from the study area (Figs. 1.4 & 1.5). These are summarised in **Appendix A**, outlining the nature of each site and the pottery recorded. Sites were selected based on a set of predefined criteria. These include the availability of contextual information, *i.e.* where find spots and patterns of deposition and association were recorded. Sites with limited contextual information or where the find type could not be defined are listed in the regional appendices (see **Apps. C3**, **D3**, & **E3**)[11]. The dataset, whilst large, is only a sample of the probable assemblage in use at the time. As demonstrated by the supplementary lists of other vessels in the appendices, the actual number of pots in use originally will have been much higher. This raises important questions around the nature of the conclusions drawn here

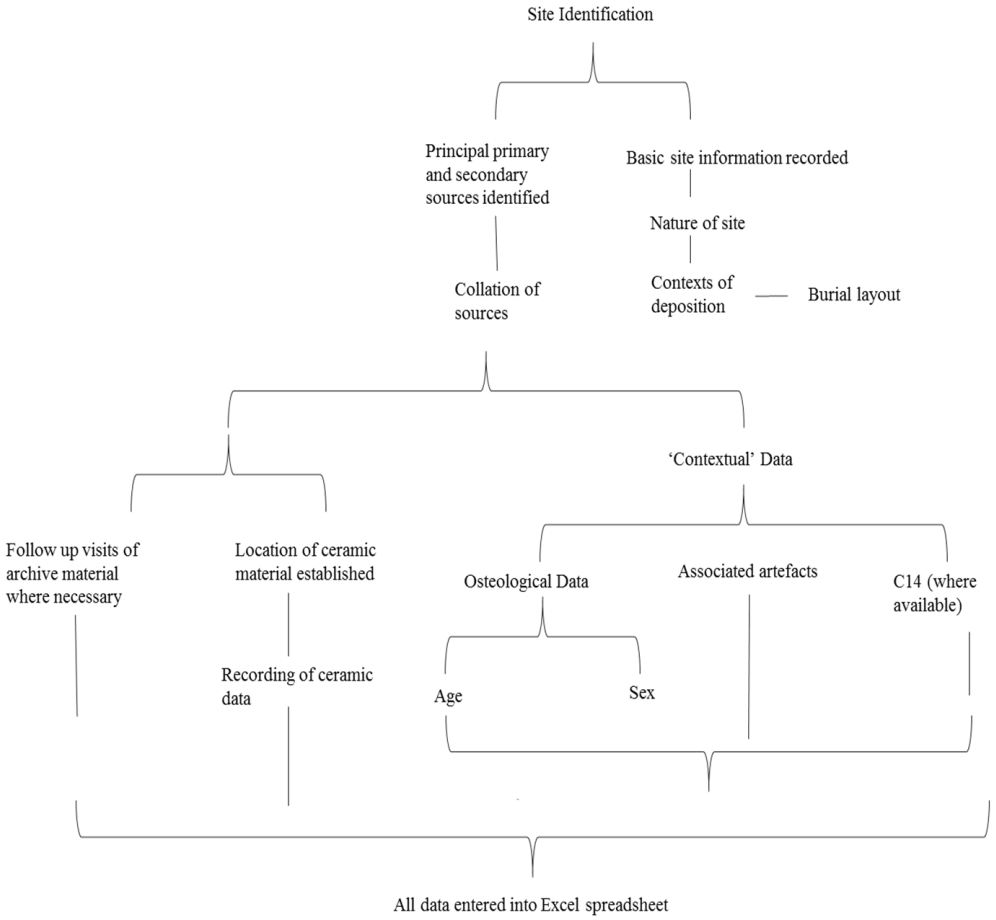


Figure 1.7: *Process of data collection and recording*

[10] *Available at https://canmore.org.uk/.*
[11] *No additional vessels were recorded from the Shetland Isles and Fair Isle*

and the impact of this on the kind of questions that can be asked. Importantly, there are clear gaps in the distribution of recorded finds (Fig. 1.4). Whether these are real or a result of bias in investigation is unclear. In part, the distribution of finds can be argued to follow areas of agricultural activities, antiquarian interest, or recent commercial developments. This issue of sample size and potential bias is returned to later in this thesis.

Several archives were excluded from the project due to problems around the quality of the available information. In the case of older archives, it was noted that pottery or paper records were missing or incomplete, and that some bags or boxes had lost their associations with contexts or features. Fortunately, in several cases it was possible to reconstruct the archive and produce detailed overviews of the site. Where it has not been possible to reconstruct or locate contextual information, these have been incorporated into the supplementary vessel lists (see **Apps. C3**, **D3**, & **E3**). A third issue relates to the condition of the available ceramic material. These ranged from whole vessels to single fragments, affecting the level of reconstruction and, in turn, analysis (Fig. 1.6). Where vessels were highly fragmentary, a cautious approach to identification was taken (*e.g.* Gibson, A. 1982: 192). In the case of assemblages from domestic sites or chambered cairns, limited numbers of reconstructable vessels were recovered (Fig. 1.6). The condition of each assemblage was recorded in the database. These problems of recovery and reconstruction will be returned to later in the thesis.

Information on sites was initially gathered through available corpora of earlier Bronze Age pottery (*e.g.* Abercromby 1912; Clarke, D.L. 1970; Longworth 1984; Gibson, A. 1982; Cowie, T. 1978). This was supplemented with searches of the online database CANMORE[12] hosted by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)[13] and the Highland Historic Environment Record (HER)[14]. Information from each site was entered into pro-forma record sheets (**App. G1**), with separate forms for the recording of pottery (**App. G2-G4**). This recording also included defining the site type alongside the contexts in which ceramic finds were recorded (see below). In addition, *x y* co-ordinates for the mapping of finds and construction of distribution maps were recorded (Fig. 1.7).

Following the identification of relevant sites and recording of basic information, references for each site were reviewed to collect further contextual information. Excavation reports were predominantly obtained from the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

[12] *Available at https://canmore.org.uk/*
[13] *As of 2015 the RCAHMS was merged with Historic Scotland forming Historic Environment Scotland (H.E.S).*
[14] *Available at http://her.highland.gov.uk/*

Site type	Definition
Domestic	Mixed range of occupation sites, including dune sites, occupation spreads/ refuse and probable structures (see **Apps. H1 & H2**). Under this heading a range of pit features are discussed although their function is unclear and could relate to non-domestic activity. These features are often subject to a variety of depositional processes, which can pose a challenge to interpreting site function and ceramic assemblages (Gibson, A. 1982: 27-48) (see **Section 2.5.1**).
Funerary	Sites of varying type where ceramics were deposited in various funerary settings. These include unobtrusive cists, which were not covered or set into a mound (Downes 2005: 34), cists set into chambered cairns and cemeteries. Other funerary settings include rock or earth cut pits (see **Apps. H1** & **H2**).
Chambered cairn, non-funerary (NF)	Chambered cairns where ceramic finds were intermixed in the fill or placed as structured deposits but cannot be directly related to funerary activity.
Stone circle/ settings	Deposits of a non-funerary nature at stone circles/ settings. Stone settings include examples of single standing stones or stone rows (**App. H2**). These deposits can include structured depositions, often associated with decommissioning events.
Indeterminate (Indet.)	Sites for which there is limited or insufficient information to describe the site type.

Table 1.1: *Principal site types considered in this thesis (see **Apps. H1** & **H2** for definitions of parent and sub-contexts)*

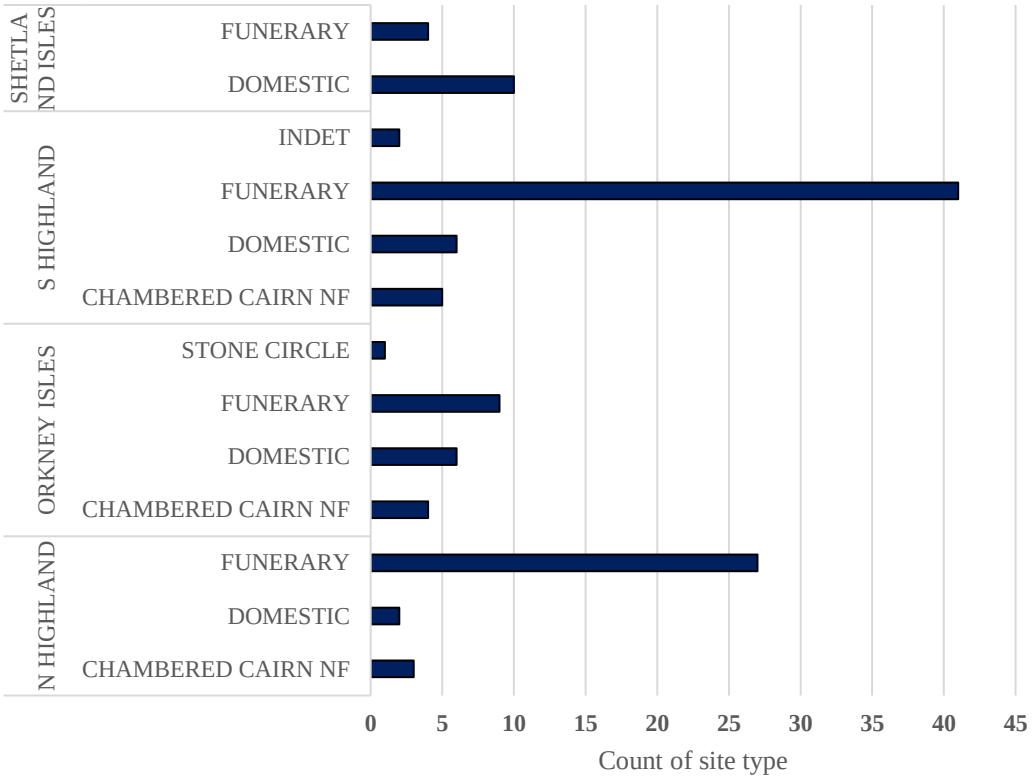


Figure 1.8: *Site types by region (see Table 1.1 for definition of site types)*

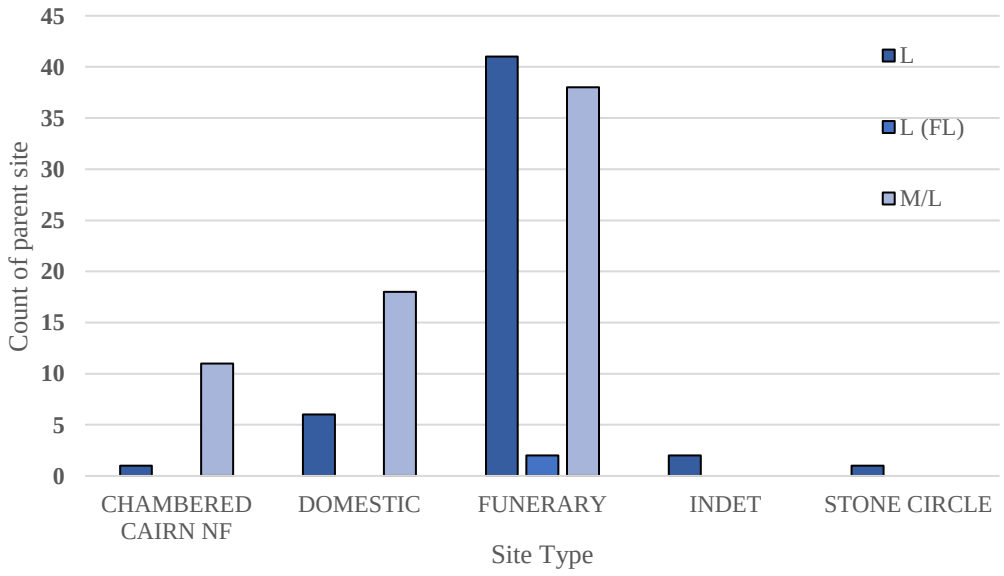


Figure 1.9: *Site types re-recorded from the study area (see Table 1.1 for definition of site types)*

Key: ***M/L.*** *Reviewed through museum visit and available literature,* ***L (FL).*** *Reviewed through extant literature, finds now lost,* ***L.*** *Reviewed through available literature*

(P.S.A.S), Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society (P.P.S) and Discovery and Excavation Scotland (D.E.S). Additional regional journals were consulted alongside the Statistical Accounts of Scotland (S.A.S). Unpublished material for several sites was provided by the excavators, allowing for more in-depth analyses of the material. The data collection was supplemented, where necessary, with visits to Historic Scotland, RCAHMS, Shetland Museum and Archives to obtain further information about the contexts in which finds were made. In the case of Shetland, this information was employed to develop clearer understandings of stratigraphy and patterns of deposition at several sites (**App. B3**).

These data were recorded in a single Excel Spreadsheet to facilitate comparison and analysis across the study area (see below). Within the dataset, comprising seventy-three fields (**CD1**) [15], sites were initially divided into five principal types (Table 1.1). Funerary sites formed around 67% of the overall sample, concentrated primarily in the South Highlands, with a further scatter in the North Highlands (Figs. 1.4 & 1.8). Domestic sites formed around 20% of the total, and in contrast to funerary sites, these were located primarily in the Northern Isles (Figs. 1.4 & 1.8). The majority of these are from Shetland (41%, *n.* 10). Sites in the dataset were further defined by their parent context and sub-context. The parent context denotes the type of site where the find was made with the sub-contexts defining the context where the vessel was found. Definitions of parent and sub-contexts are provided in **Appendix H1 & H2**. In the case of burials, this involved the feature the cist was set into, including natural or artificial mounds. This dataset included further information on other artefacts[16], relevant dates and any human remains recovered (Fig. 1.7).

1.3.2 Pottery Recording

56% of the sites were rerecorded in detail through a series of museum visits (Fig. 1.8), the remaining vessels were assessed through the available literature. In several cases, further information was provided by museums through email consultation. In line with guidelines published by the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (P.C.R.G) (2010) the pottery was quantified by:

- sherd count
- weight

[15] *The fields of the dataset are further outlined on **CD1***
[16] *A range of additional artefact types were recorded from funerary contexts. These are defined in **Appendix H3***

- estimated number of vessels (ENV)

In most cases pots from funerary contexts comprised whole or near complete vessels, so no sherd counts were made (Fig. 1.6). In several cases it was not possible to obtain sherd counts for domestic assemblage's due to their fragmentary states. Rim diameters, where present, were recorded using a standardised rim chart to the nearest millimetre[17]. Where deemed appropriate and possible, the vessel fabric (the material of which the pot is made (see **Section 4.2.1**) was recorded on pro-forma sheets (**App. G4**). Examination of fabrics was not possible where vessels were intact. Where recorded, the vessel fabric is described according to the nature of their inclusions, sorting and quantity (P.C.R.G 2010). Inclusions, either natural or deliberately added, were measured to the nearest millimetre, where the size of the inclusions was more mixed a range of sizes is given. Aspects of firing including the colour are, where deemed significant, noted in the fabric descriptions. Initially a splitting approach was taken to the designation of fabric types, but during the process of recording and subsequent analysis it became apparent that many of the defined fabric groups formed a broader continuum within which it was difficult to define differences objectively. Vessel forms were recorded following a set of criteria designed to facilitate cross comparison of forms across the region, but at the same time allow the articulation of regional differences. This scheme is outlined in **Chapter 4**. Information for each site was recorded on pro-forma record sheets, with a separate sheet for single finds and a further form for assemblages (**App. G2** & **G3**).

Detailed re-recording was undertaken of assemblages from domestic sites in Shetland. This decision was motivated by the comparative wealth of domestic material from the region and the relatively understudied nature of the pottery. In total, nine domestic sites from Shetland were reviewed, including the large assemblage from House 1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), and the previously unpublished site at the Pund of Burland (SFI8). Pottery reports, produced during the data collection for domestic sites in Shetland, are contained in **Appendix B3**. Detailed descriptions of the pottery are given in the relevant pottery catalogues of each appendix, following the site catalogue. Where available, illustrations or photographs of the vessel are included along with measurements and descriptions of the decoration and form.

1.3.3 Other artefacts

In forty cases, burials contained additional artefacts alongside the pottery, ranging from one to five additional objects (Fig. 1.10). These were recorded in the dataset using a suite of

[17] *Downloaded from http://potsherd.net/atlas/gallery/topics/rimchart-180.pdf*

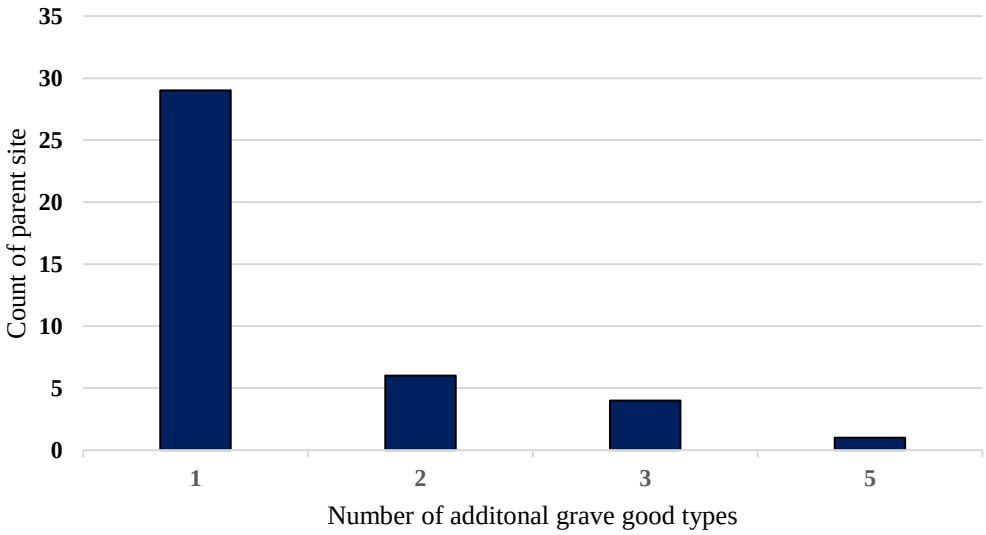


Figure 1.10: *Number of additional grave good types recorded from funerary contexts*

predefined codes (**App. H3**). Following the divisions set out by Woodward and Hunter, J. (2015) these are divided into:

- items of equipment
- items of personal adornment.

Items of equipment include flint tools and stone bracers, while items of personal adornment include distinctive jet spacer plate necklaces or disc bead necklaces (see **App. H3**). Within these categories there is a degree of ambiguity, and items of equipment can be employed as items of adornment, and vice versa (*ibid.*). The principal non-ceramic artefacts discussed in this thesis are outlined in **Appendix H3**. The definitions provided in **Appendix H3** are not intended as a comprehensive review of all known artefacts from the period. Instead, items associated with ceramics in accordance with the defined research aims were prioritised. Descriptions of associated finds are included in the finds list for each site in the site catalogues.

1.3.4 Osteological data

A further area of recording involved the collation of information pertaining to skeletal material found in association with pottery from funerary contexts. Overall, osteological data was limited, although burials with Beakers tended to be better recorded. The association of non-Beaker types with cremation practices has led to the destruction of much potential evidence. Cremated remains from 19th and 20th century excavations were typically not retained or subjected to detailed analysis (McKinley 2015: vii). Inhumations are also poorly recorded,

Age Category	Age Range
Sub-Adult (SA)	0-17
Young Adult (YA)	18-24
Middle Adult (MA)	/25-44
Older Adult (OA)	45 +
Adult	General category +18 *where age range not specified but stated to be an adult*

Table 1.2: *Age categories employed in this thesis*

with limited information on the age and sex of the individual (see **Chapter 11**). In several older reports, skulls had been subjected to detailed analysis, owing to the perceived importance of craniology in determining origins (*cf.* Brodie 1994). The accuracy of current age and sex attributions is unclear in many cases. Unfortunately, there was no scope within this project to undertake detailed analysis of the remains. Recent re-dating of selected remains from across the study area has provided up-to-date age and sex information for several individuals, and this is utilised in the project. A standardised set of age categories are employed in this thesis[18] (Table 1.2). Due to the uneven nature of the dataset and the reliance on older material most skeletons have been assigned to generic age and sex categories. With cremations, the sexing of individuals is problematic, and these have, unless otherwise stated in the report, been assigned to the INDET category. This information is summarised in each regional appendix.

1.3.5 Radiocarbon Dating

40 sites have associated radiocarbon dates, several domestic sites had multiple dates relating to a range of features (Fig. 1.11). In text, calibrated dates are presented at 95% probability. Dates – unless stated otherwise – have been calibrated using OxCal v.4.2.2 (Bronk Ramsay 2013) with atmospheric data from Reimer *et al. (*2009)[19]. All dates – unless stated otherwise – are rounded to the nearest 10. The raw dates are presented in **Appendix F**. The quality of the dates across the study area varied considerably and in several cases the degree of association between the date and the pottery is questionable. As highlighted by Waterbolk the

[18] *This system follows that employed in the Beaker and Bodies Project (M. Jay, J. Montgomery pers. comm.).*

[19] *For details cf. https://c14.arch.ox.ac.uk/oxcal.html*

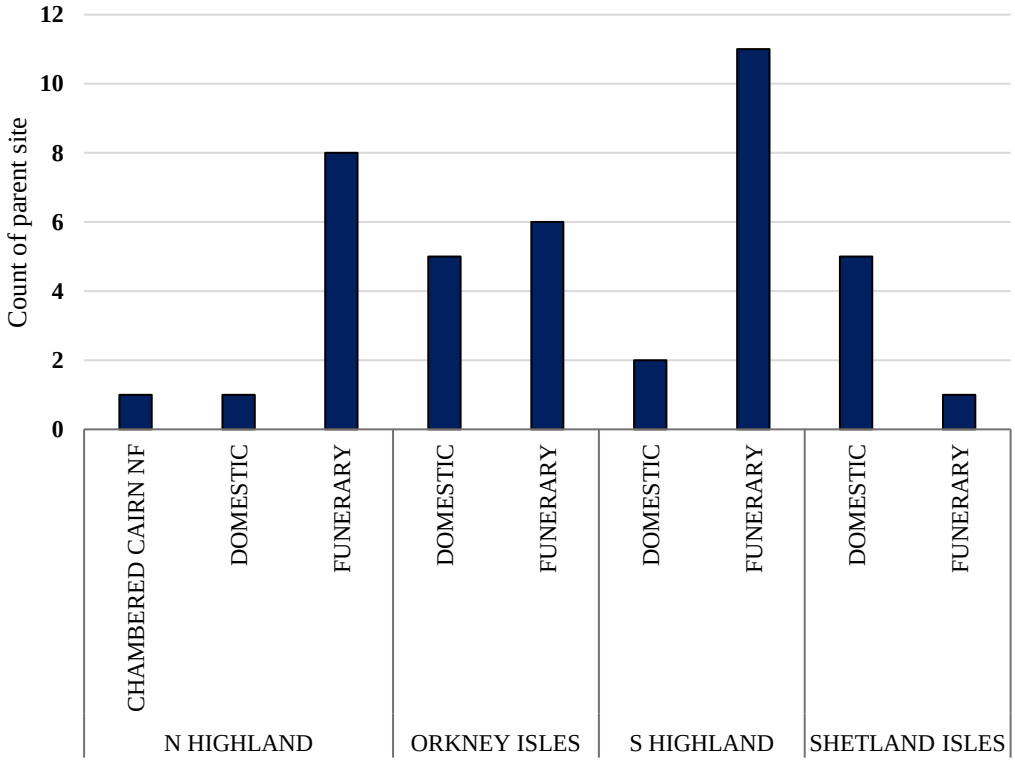


Figure 1.11: *Sites with radiocarbon dates by region and site type (see Table 1.1 for definition of site types, for uncalibrated radiocarbon dates see* ***App. F****)*

relationship between the dated sample and other artefacts needs to be carefully considered (1971: 15-7). Where no clear or direct association can be established, this is noted. Details of the sample type and context is given in **Appendix F**. Dates with standard deviations +/- 100 years, have been omitted due to problems of reliability (*cf.* Ashmore 1999; Sheridan 2007b for an overview of problems of sampling and accuracy). Where Bayesian models[20] are available these are employed where appropriate. These include recent modelling of Beaker and Food Vessels from across Britain (*e.g.* Healy 2012; Wilkin 2013).

1.4 Summary & Thesis structure

In this chapter I have introduced the study area and the key questions under consideration. Before outlining the interpretive approaches adopted in response to these, I will in **Chapter 2** examine aspects of the later 3rd millennium further, introducing the key ceramic types and contexts under examination in this thesis. This is followed by a review of the different ways the period has been interpreted in **Chapter 3**, looking at questions of typology, material culture

[20] *For an overview of Bayesian modelling and its application cf. Bayliss et al. 2011: Chp. 2*

and interpretations of change. The second half of **Chapter 3** critiques these approaches and explores the potential of relational approaches in developing alternative narratives. This draws on previous notions of biography and performance. **Chapter 4** sets out the ceramic classifications employed in the thesis, building on points raised in **Chapters 2** and **3**. In **Part II** the evidence from each region is presented opening with **Chapter 5**, outlining the nature of ceramics and their use from 3000-2500 BC providing the long term chronological context for the study. In **Chapter 6**, the pottery from the Shetland Isles and Fair Isle (SFI) is outlined, followed by the Orkney Isles (ORK) in **Chapter 7**. **Chapter 8** examines the North Highlands (NH), and **Chapter 9** examines the South Highlands (SH). **Part III** provides a discussion and overview of the key trends and themes emerging from these regional studies. These are discussed in **Chapter 10**, which summarises the key aspects of the pottery from the study area. This considers intra -regional trends and their wider connections. In **Chapter 11**, a critical discussion of interconnections and emergent themes is presented. A final summary is given in **Chapter 12** addressing the key questions outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO
CERAMICS & CHRONOLOGY IN THE 3RD MILLENNIUM BC

2.1 Introduction

In **Chapter 1** I introduced aspects of the 3rd millennium, noting the recurrent trend to discuss the period from a macroscale perspective, and the role played by material culture in these analyses. Before outlining the interpretive approach adopted in this thesis, I will examine further the broader scale in which this study is situated. Divided into four parts, this review highlights key trends in ceramics, patterns of association and deposition from 2500-1800 BC. The first part encompasses the initial use and development of Beakers from 2500-2300 BC. This includes a brief examination of the relationship between early Beakers and Grooved Ware, the principal ceramic type of the early 3rd millennium. The earlier 3rd millennium of the study area is examined further in **Chapter 5**. The second part examines the later development of Beakers and the emergence of Food Vessels. The third section, from 1900 BC, considers the growing importance of cremation and the emergence of Collared and Cordoned Urns. In the final section, the nature of domestic pottery is considered, highlighting the potentially fluid nature of ceramic categories, and their relationship to funerary material.

2.2 2500-2300 BC: The old and the new

Beaker pottery is first recorded in funerary contexts across Britain from around 2450 BC (Healy 2012; Needham 2005; Fitzpatrick 2011: Figure 72) (Table 2.1). Early Beakers include s-profile (typically low-bellied) and low-carinated forms (Fig. 2.2), decorated with all over cord (AOC) impressions or complex geometric zoned designs (Maritime-Derived) (Needham 2005: 178)[1]. AOC decorated Beakers are predominantly recorded from the north of Britain[2], whilst Maritime-Derived vessels are common in the south (*ibid*.). In the south-west of Scotland there is a notable concentration of early low-carinated/ s-profile Beakers, including those from Upper Largie, Argyll and Knockdoon, Wigtown (Ritchie, J.N.G. & Shepherd, I. 1973: 21; see also Sheridan 2008b). Other examples include the pair of Beakers from Bathgate, West

[1] Whilst most examples of low-carinated Beakers are primary in the overall Beaker sequence late examples have been recorded from several sites. Dates from Eweford, East Lothian and Fox Plantation, Wigtown suggest that low-carinated Beakers could have had a long currency extending to the 23rd-22nd century (Sheridan 2007b; see also Needham 2012)

[2] Almost 80% of AOC Beakers from funerary contexts have been recorded from north of the Humber (Needham 2005: 183) – see also Fowler & Wilkin (2016)

Lothian, and the herringbone decorated Beaker from Newmill, Perthshire (Figs. 2.1, 2.2 & 2.1). In England, early Beakers have been recorded from multiple sites, including Radley Barrow Hills, Oxfordshire (Barclay, A. & Haplin 1998) and Amesbury, Wiltshire (Fitzpatrick 2012; see Needham 2005: Table 1 for an overview)[3]. Stylistically, early Beakers have also been recorded from domestic sites across Britain (Fitzpatrick 2015: 45, 52; Needham 2005: 182). The chronology and relationship of these to those found in funerary contexts is at present unclear (Needham 2005: 182; Sheridan 2012: 52; Needham 2005: 182; Brodie 1998; see Fitzpatrick 2015) (see **Section 2.5.2**). Additional examples of early Beakers have been documented at henges and chambered cairns (Bradley 2007: 153). Where recorded from chambered cairns, these are associated with funerary or structured deposits (Wilkin 2016; Curtis & Wilkin 2012: 246; Lucas 1996: 108; Gibson, A. 1982: 27-34).

The form and decoration of early Beakers find ready parallel to examples from the Continent, particularly to those found between Brittany and the Rhine[4] (*ibid.*). The early Beakers from Newmill and Upper Largie find parallel in the Netherlands (Drenth & Lohof 2005: 438-41;

Author	**Start Date (cal BC)**	**Fission Horizon**	**End Date (cal BC)**
Needham (2010)	*c.2500*	*c. 2250-2150*	*c.1800*
Healy (2012: Model 2, 95% probability) England♦	*2490-2340*		*1880-1740*
Healy 2012: Model 2. 95% probability) Scotland	*2350-2240*		*2130-2030*
Sheridan 2007b (Scotland)♠	*c.2500*	*c. 2350*	*c.1800*
Carlin 2011: 217 (see Charts 8.4, 8.6 & 8.8) (Ireland)	*2604–2473*		*2196–2022*

Table 2.1: *Modelled dates for the early use of Beakers. The fission horizon represents the point as defined by Needham when Beakers are widespread across Britain (see **Section 2.3**)*

♦ *see also Woodward & Hunter, J. 2015: 462*

♠ *see also Wilkin & Curtis 2012*

[3] It is unclear if the initial use of Beakers in England and Scotland was contemporary, or whether Scottish examples developed later (Healy 2012: Table 10.2; Curtis & Wilkin 2012; see also Parker Pearson et al. 2016) (Table 2.1).

[4] These vessels are themselves connected to a wider ceramic lineage including links to Corded Ware and Maritime Beakers (Needham 2005; see also Beckerman 2015)

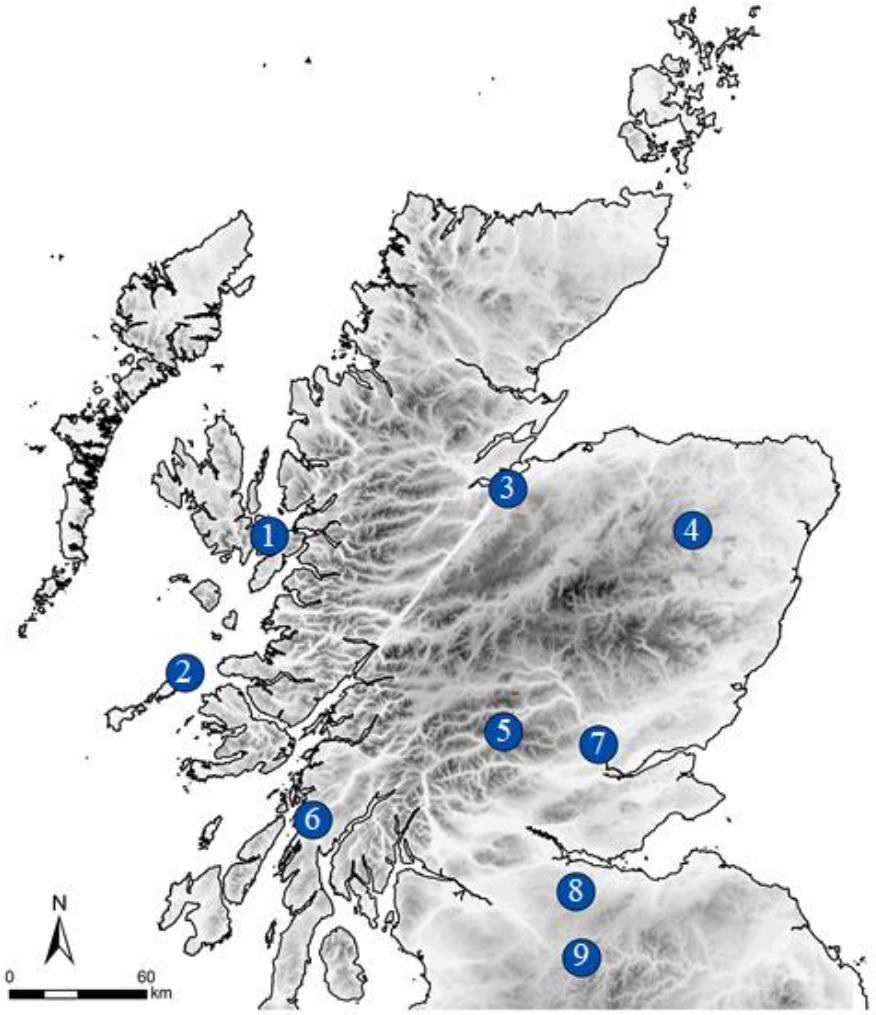


Figure 2.1: *Distribution of early Beakers in Scotland (after Shepherd, I. 2012)*

Key: ***1.*** *New Broadford (SH41), Inverness-shire* ***2.*** *Sorisdale, Coll, Argyll* ***3.*** *Beechwood Park (SH8), Inverness-shire* ***4.*** *Barflat, Aberdeenshire* ***5.*** *Balnahanaid, Perthshire* ***6.*** *Upper Largie, Argyll* ***7.*** *Newmill, Perthshire* ***8.*** *Bathgate, West Lothian,* ***9.*** *Biggar Common, Lanarkshire*

Sheridan 2008b: 258). European connections extend beyond visual similarity to the use of Continental methods of ceramic production (Sheridan & Hammersmith 2006: 81)[5], patterns of association and modes of burial (Fitzpatrick 2015: 53; Sheridan 2012: 43-4). This includes flat graves, with or without wooden chambers[6], defined by ditches or rings of wooden posts (Fig. 2.2). Similar burials, surrounded by post circles or ditched enclosures, are commonly recorded

[5] *This includes the use of spatulas to reduce the thickness of the vessel walls (see* ***Section 4.2.1****. for further discussion of ceramic manufacture)*

[6] *Timber chambers or wooden coffins continue to be employed after cist burial had become popular from around 2300 BC (Sheridan 2008b: 258). Examples of timber chambers/ wooden coffins have been recorded at Seafield West (SH47), Inverness-shire and possibly from Kintore, Aberdeenshire (Cook & Dunbar 2008: 85)*

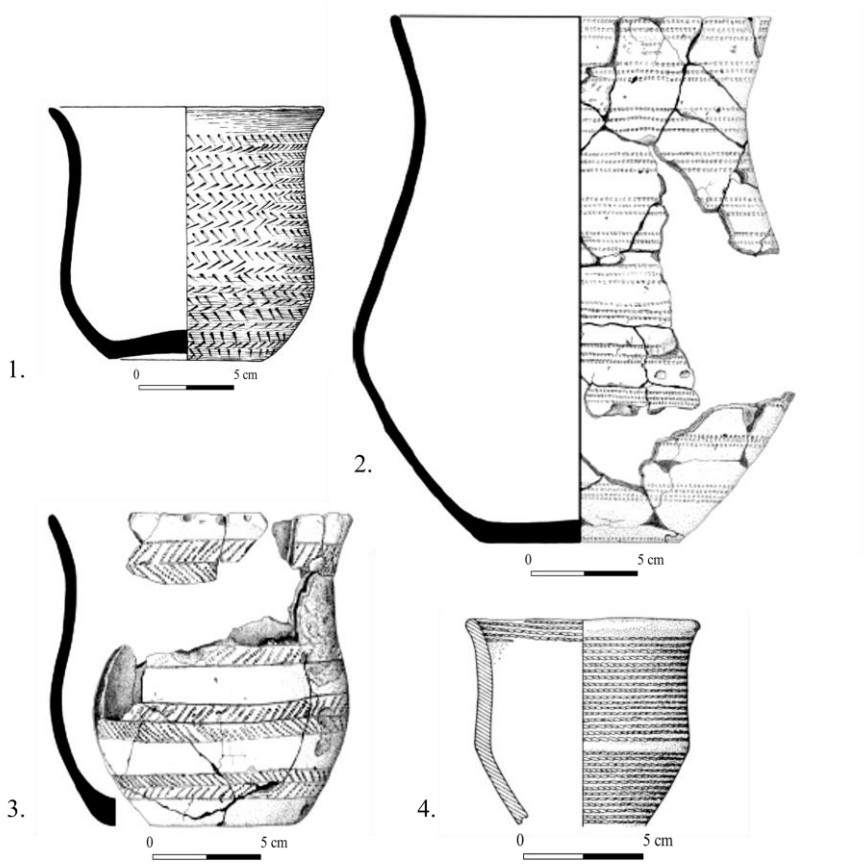


Figure 2.2: *Early Beakers from Scotland:*

Key: ***1.*** *Newmill, Perthshire (Watkins & Shepherd, I. 1981: Fig 2),* ***2., 3.,*** *Upper Largie, Argyll (Cook et al. 2010: Fig 10, Fig 11.),* ***4.*** *Sorrisdale, Coll, Argyll (Ritchie, J.N.G. & Crawford 1978: Fig 3)*

Figure 2.3: *Bracer and arrowheads from Dornoch Nursery (NH15), Sutherland (Author © I.M.A.G)*

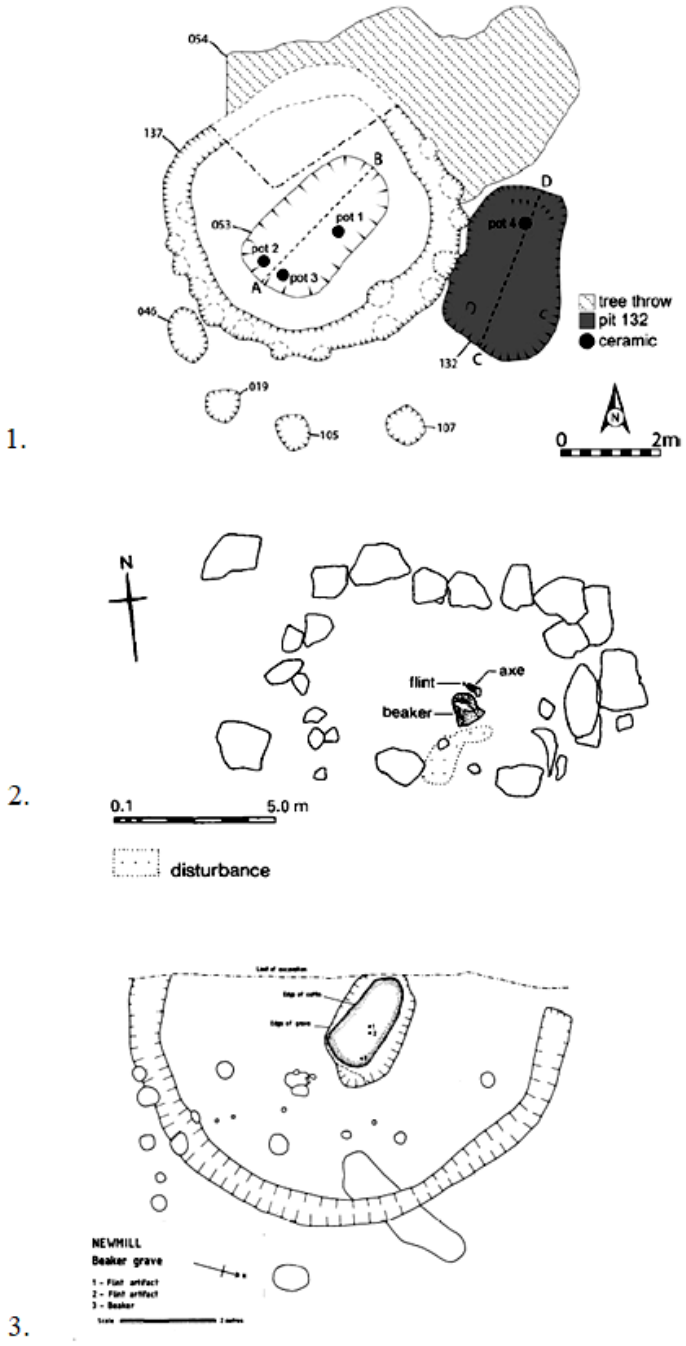


Figure 2.4: *Early burials with Beakers from Scotland*

Key: ***1.*** *Upper Largie, Argyll (Cook et al. 2011: Fig 7)* ***2.*** *Biggar Common, Lanarkshire (Johnston, D. 1997: illus 9)* ***3.*** *Newmill, Perthshire (Watkins & Shepherd, I. 1981: Fig 1)*

in the Netherlands (Drenth & Lohof 2005: 440-2; Sheridan 2008b: 258, but see Fokkens 2012b). These similarities have regularly been interpreted as the result of groups from the Continent settling in Britain and Ireland during the late 3rd millennium (*e.g.* Abercromby 1912; Clarke, D.L. 1970; Clark 1966; see also Fokkens 2012b) (see **Section 3.2.1**).

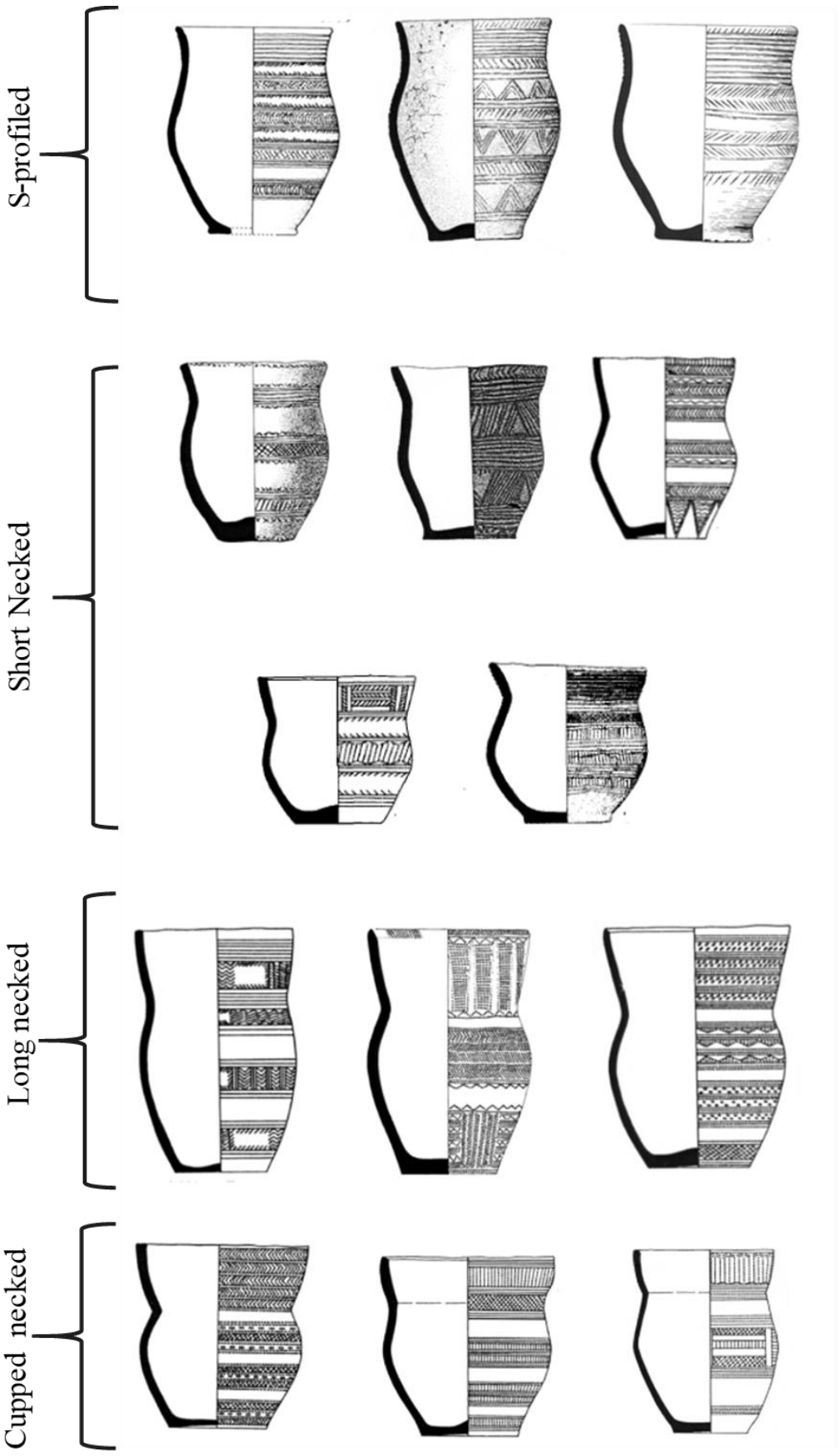


Figure 2.5: *Beaker forms from c. 2300 BC (after Needham 2005) (not to scale)*

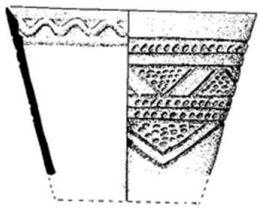
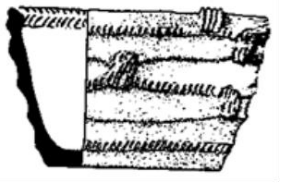
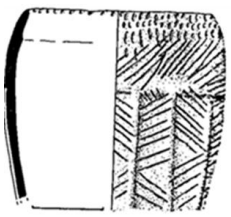
Clacton	• Simple rims • Internal grooved decoration • Internal plastic decoration • Dot filled incised decoration in single and multiple chevrons/ lozenges and oval impressions	
Woodlands	• Horizontal or converging, raised or applied cordons • Cordons range from slashed to undecorated • May also feature external ladder patterning, pellets of clay on the rim, incised herringbone on the rim • Applied or raised 'knots' at the convergence of the cordons	
Rinyo	• Recognized by internally stepped or scalloped rims • Applied pellets and roundels of clay • Applied lozenges or converging cordons, grooved, diagonal cordons and cordons with dot impressed decoration	
Durrington Walls	• Large bucket or barrel-shaped pots, richly decorated • Whipped and twisted cord impressions • Internally bevelled or concave rims • Frequent use of incised decoration • Range of geometric and non-geometric patterns	

Figure 2.6: *Principal Grooved Ware sub-styles (after Gibson, A. & Woods 1990: Fig 131)*

Recent isotopic and genetic studies lend weight to the role of mobility in the introduction of Beakers and their associated practices to Britain (Olalde *et al.* 2017)[7]. Several individuals associated with early Beakers, based on their isotopic signature, came from the Continent. Included among these 'isotopic aliens' are the Amesbury Archer and the Boscombe Bowmen in Wiltshire (Fitzpatrick 2011) and the individual from Sorisdale, Coll, Argyll (Sheridan 2012:

[7] *cf. Montgomery & Jay 2013 for an overview of techniques and application.*

43) (Fig. 2.23). Potential motivations for these journeys, include ideas of heroic journeys (*e.g.* Van de Noort 2006; Needham 2005), marriage networks (Brodie 1997, 2001) and metal prospecting (*e.g.* Sheridan 2008). The scale and impact of this mobility remains to be determined and caution should be expressed in resorting to mobility as a *de facto* explanation for change (Pitts 2017: 6; Parker Pearson 2016, see also Parker Pearson *et al.* 2016).

Associated with early Beakers are a small and widely dispersed group of burials with 'archery packages'. Bayesian modelling of available dates suggest a currency from 2340-2140 cal BC (Curtis and Wilkin 2012: 240)[8]. As with early Beakers, the artefacts associated with these suggest connections with the Continent (Fitzpatrick 2011, 2015; Turek 2015; Needham 2005: 207; Woodward & Hunter, J. 2011; Case 2004b.). 'Archery packages' are defined principally by the inclusion of stone bracers, alongside flint arrowheads and in several cases bone belt-rings (Turek 2015: 29) (Fig. 2.3). Bracers comprise small rectangles of stone with between two and six perforations at either end (Woodward & Hunter, J. 2011: Figure 1.2) (Fig. 2.3) (**App. H3**). Flint arrowheads are predominantly of the barbed variety, departing from earlier

	Forms	**Decoration**	**Dates**
Impressed Wares	Round-based bowls Other forms included taller 'jars'/ trunconic forms and 'heavy bowls' with flat bases (see Cowie 1993)	Use of impressed techniques including whipped cord, bird-bone, twisted cord, fingertip, reed and quill impressions	3600/3500 - ?3000? BC
Grooved Ware	Bucket/ tub forms	Range of decorative techniques (see Fig. 2.4). Including incision, impressed decoration including twisted cord	3000-2500 BC Þ

Table 2.2: *Key ceramic types of the early 3rd millennium*

Þ As discussed prior the 'end date' of Grooved Ware varies from region to region (see Sheridan 2016 for an overview).

[8] *See Woodward & Hunter, J. 2011: Chp. 7 for a broader discussion of the current dating of stone bracers*

leaf shaped arrows (Edmonds 1995: 137; Green 1980) (**App. H3**). Other associated artefacts include gold ornaments (see Needham & Sheridan 2014) and tanged copper daggers/ knives (Case 2004b: 201; Woodward & Hunter, J. 2011: Table 8.6). The copper used for these artefacts was sourced principally from Ross Island in south-west Ireland[9]. Here, Beakers were associated with metal extraction and processing from around 2400 BC (O'Brien 2004: 312-4, 564). [10]

In several regions, the introduction of Beaker pottery coincides with the decline of Grooved Ware (Tables 2.1 & 2.2). The precise relationship between the two ceramic types is obscured by problems of chronological resolution, exacerbated by a plateau in the calibration curve (Sheridan 2007b; Ashmore 1999). In Wessex, Beakers and Grooved Ware overlapped for around 50-70 years (Fitzpatrick 2015: 47). At Mye Plantation, Wigtown, Grooved Ware was found in association with a series of pits dated to 2560 – 2280 cal BC, but the integrity of these dates is unclear (Sheridan 2002: 795).

Grooved Ware comprises a range of highly decorated bucket/ tub vessels (Fig. 2.6). These are often defined by their different modes of decoration, which show considerable variation across Britain and Ireland. On this basis, Grooved Ware was initially split into four sub-styles, Woodland, Clacton, Durrington Walls and Rinyo (Wainwright, G. & Longworth 1971: 236-43) (Fig. 2.6). The validity of these subdivisions has been called into question due to recent discoveries and dating (MacSween 2007a: 371, 2016: 248-249; Garwood 1999). MacSween in her review of Scottish Grooved Ware suggested that rather than a uniform tradition, Grooved Ware was instead bound by an underlying grammar, with scope for individual expression and creativity (1995: 43). As with Beakers, Grooved Ware could cite wider concepts, but deploy and frame these within specific regional contexts (see **Section 5.2.4**).

Alongside decorated vessels examples of undecorated types have been recorded widely, but these have not been examined in detail (MacSween 2007a: 281). Identification of plain sherds is problematic, owing to its undiagnostic nature. This is compounded further by the highly abraded and often mixed nature of assemblages. As argued by Cowie and MacSween, considering the undiagnostic nature of plain pottery it is possible that vessels labelled 'flat rim

[9] Copper produced at Ross Island, so called 'A-metal', was widely distributed across Britain and Ireland during the late 3rd millennium, dominating the metal trade for almost 500 years (Bray, P. & Pollard 2012: 856; O'Brien 2004: 550; Timberlake 2017: Table 4; see also Ixer & Budd 1998. Gold was probably sourced from areas of Cornwall (see Timberlake 2017)

[10] Tentative evidence for early metal prospecting/ extraction is recorded from Wales (Timberlake 2014, Burrow 2012), and sherds of AOC Beakers have been recorded from Thornwell Farm, Monmouthshire and Tinkinswood, Glamorgan (Burrow 2012: 176). Despite this early Beaker types in Wales are rare (Lynch et al. 2000: 115; Savory 1980: 72-6)

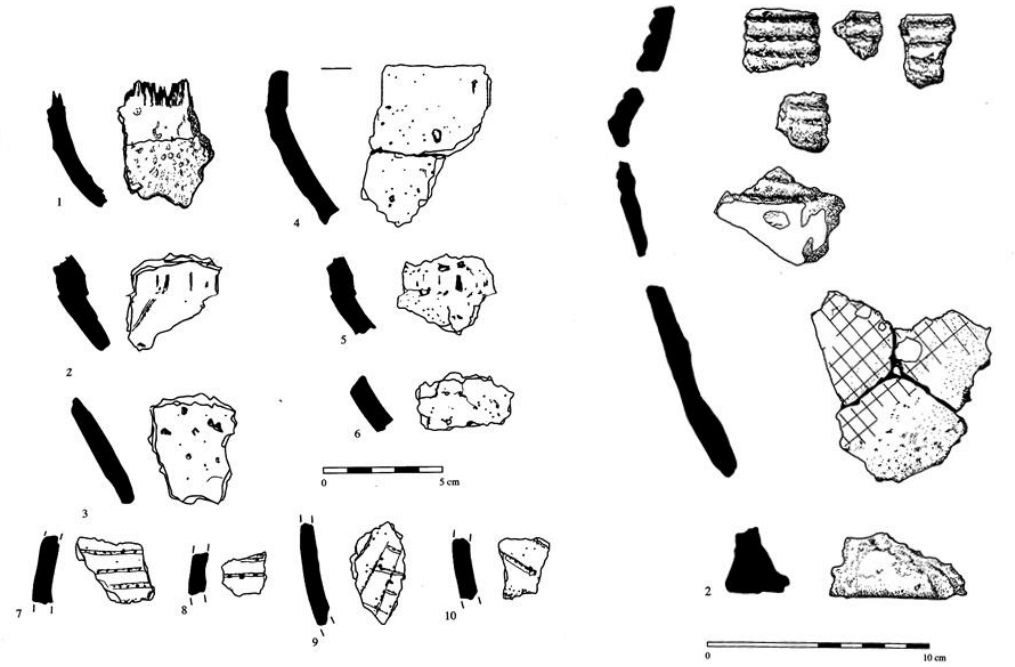


Figure 2.7: *Plain and decorated Grooved Ware from Dunragit, Wigtown (after Thomas, J. 2015: Figures 6.1, 6.3)*

ware' represent other undecorated Grooved Ware sherds (Cowie, T. & MacSween 1999: 54) (**Section 2.3**). Whether these sherds should be grouped under the label of Grooved Ware is unclear, but despite these questions of terminology, there is a clear overlap in forms and fabrics (*e.g.* MacSween 2007a). These could represent one further component of the underlying grammar of Grooved Ware, fulfilling a range of functions existing alongside more specialised Grooved Ware that is deployed in specific contexts (see **Section 5.2.4**). Assemblages can range from mixed - comprising both decorated and undecorated Grooved Ware - to containing only decorated or undecorated sherds. Examples of mixed assemblages are widely recorded including from Dunragit, Wigtown, where plain bowls were recorded alongside decorated tubs and jars (Leivers & Thomas, J. 2015: 112). (Fig. 2.7). Analogous plain bowls have been recorded from the sand dune sites at Luce Sands, Wigtown (**Section 2.5.2**).

Grooved Ware is frequently associated with stone and timber circles, as well as large scale gatherings and feasting events (Thomas, J. 2010; Sheridan 2004b). At these sites vessels are deployed in highly visible consumptive events, the significance of the pots stemming in part from these roles (Harris 2013: 183) (**Section 3.3.1**). The spread of Grooved Ware alongside other distinct forms of material culture demonstrates the existence of broad interregional networks across Britain and Ireland during the early 3rd millennium (Edmonds 1995: 129).

This includes evidence for the exchange of ideas and materials between the Boyne Valley in Ireland and the Orkney Isles (Sheridan 2004b: 32) (see **Section 5.2**).

In several areas, Grooved Ware replaces earlier Impressed Wares, although the precise temporal relationship between the two is unclear (MacSween 2007a: 375; Gibson, A. & Kinnes 1997). The term 'Impressed Wares' denotes a wide range of pottery types (Gibson, A. 2002a: 81), including those formerly referred to in Scotland as Scottish Impressed Wares (McInnes 1969) and Later Neolithic Decorated Wares (Kinnes 1985) or grouped under the label Peterborough Ware[11] (see Burgess 1980: 38-41; Gibson, A. 2002: 78-82; Sheridan 2016: 202-4) (Table 2.2). As with Grooved Ware, there is a high degree of regional variation with several different trajectories of development (MacSween 2007a; Sheridan 1998, 2016; Cowie, T. 1993). Forms are typically heavy-rimmed, round-based bowls typically decorated with impressions of twisted cord and whipped cord, alongside sticks and animal bones (Gibson, A. 2002: 780) (Fig. 4.12). It is possible aspects of decoration and design carried over onto Grooved Ware in certain regions, but the precise relationship between the two traditions remains poorly understood.

2.3 2300-2000 BC: Regionalism and diversification

The temporal relationship between the initial "*circumscribed*" use of Beakers and their widespread usage from 2300 BC is unclear (Needham 2005: 209; Sheridan 2012b). This period, dubbed the "*fission horizon*" by Needham, sees an increased variation in Beaker forms and decoration (Needham 2005: 209; Curtis & Wilkin 2016: 40)[12] (Table 3.2). This includes the emergence of short and long-necked Beaker vessels (Fig. 2.5, Table 2.3). Short-necked forms dominate in northern Britain, whilst in the south long-necked vessels are the norm (Needham 2012: 11). Additional forms include s-profile and cupped-necked vessels (Table 2.3, Fig. 2.5). In contrast to the preceding phase, Beakers are defined by their inter-regional aspects, rather than their supra-regional connections to the continent (*i.e.* Clarke, D.L. 1970: 259; Vander Linden & Wilkin 2015). The precise link between these scattered arrivals and later Beaker types is unclear (*cf.* Sheridan 2012b). Considering this caution should be expressed in presupposing a direct evolutionary link between the two. Beaker types during this period likely incorporate motifs and modes of decoration found among Grooved Ware (Case

[11] *The term 'Peterborough Ware' itself encompasses several substyles including Fengate, Mortlake and Ebbsfleet*

[12] *The fission horizon for Needham represents the point where Beakers move from being part of an initially restricted and circumscribed culture to one that was wide spread and integrated within regional networks, creating a series of distinct regional effects (see Needham 2005, 2012)*

2001: 369; Gibson, A. 1982: 82-3). Case cites the use of grooves, ribs and contrasting motifs, alongside the use of massed chevrons, and geometrical motifs as evidence for such overlap (2001*:* 369). This highlights the potential fluidity of ceramics during the period, with change not being a case of one type simply replacing another. Instead a series of choices are made which lead to the emergence of distinct regional styles, which can combine aspects of preceding types. The motives for these are multiple and can relate to functional choices alongside the wider contexts and networks that pots were involved in (see **Section 3.3**).

Towards the end of the 3rd millennium Beakers are increasingly excluded from burials (Needham 2005: 207). This shift is related to changes in wider networks (*ibid.*: 209), and the emergence of other artefacts, including Food Vessels (Wilkin 2011a: 86; Healy 2012: 156) (Figs. 2.9 & 2.10, Table 2.4). Food Vessels, emerging around the 22nd century BC, are from the outset highly regional in their outlook, encompassing a range of distinctive bi and tri-partite bowl and vase forms (Figs. 2.8 & 2.9). Similar decorative techniques are used on Food Vessel to those on earlier Impressed Wares, including whipped cord impressions (Fig. 4.12.2). The combination of this and the presence of heavy rims has often been taken to indicate that Food Vessels evolved from Impressed Wares (Piggott 1931: 73; Smith, I.F. 1956: 158; Gibson, A.

Short-necked	
Healy 2012 (Model 2: 95%)	*Scotland: Start: 2340-2230 End: 2150-2040* ♠
S-profile	*England: Healy (Model 2: 95%) Start: 2450-2290 End: 1920-1770*
Healy 2012 (Model 2: 95%)	*Scotland: Healy (Model 2: 95%) Start: 2340-2240 End: 2200-2060*
Long & Cupped necked	*England: Healy (Model 2: 94%) Start: 2310-2120 end: 1940-1780*
Healy 2012 (Model 2: 94%)	*Scotland: c. 22nd century onwards*

Table 2.3: *Modelled date ranges of short-necked, s-profile and long and cupped-necked Beakers in Britain (after Healy 2012, Model 2, 95%)*

♠ *This date range closely overlaps with that modelled by Curtis & Wilkin (2012) 95.4% 2340-2110 BC*

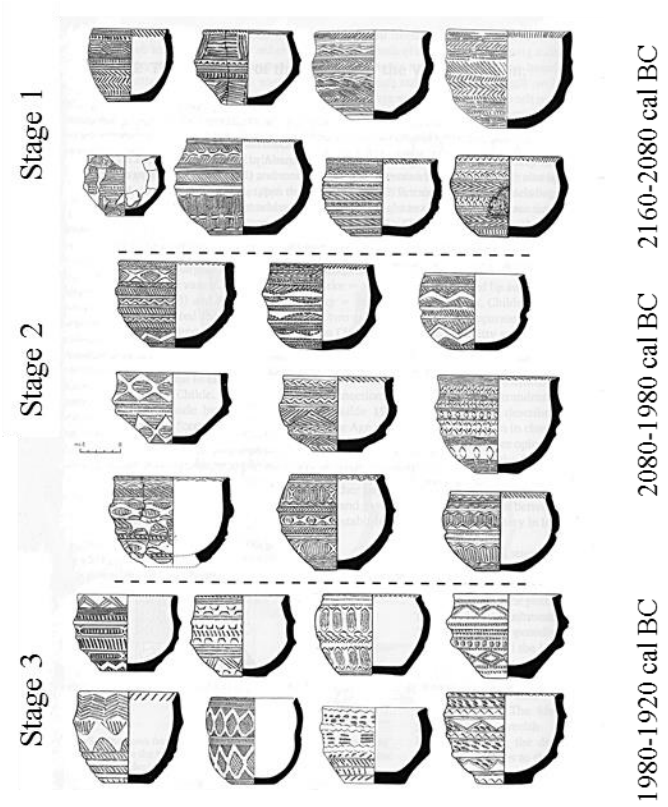


Figure 2.8: *Chronology and development of Irish Bowls (after Brindley 2007)*

1984: 80, Gibson, A. & Woods 1990: 157; Gibson, A. & Kinnes 1997: 65)[13]. Current dating suggests that Impressed Wares in England ended around 3060–2880 cal BC (Marshall, P. *et al.* 2011: Model D; see also Ard & Darvill 2015, Gibson, A. & Kinnes 1997) and in Scotland *c.* 2900 BC (MacSween 2007a: 368; Sheridan 1997: 220-1) (Table 2.2). Given this chronological disparity a direct link between the two traditions is unlikely[14]. One alternative suggestion is that Food Vessels deliberately referenced "*an archaic style of ceramic*", asserting local identity following the use of Continentally derived Beaker pottery (Bradley 2002: 58). However, this argument relies on an oppositional view of Food Vessels, placing them as a local response to Beakers, diminishing the potential range of factors involved in their emergence. This includes their connection to wider networks of the period, notably with Ireland and the development of bronze smelting (Wilkin & Vander Linden 2015: 110). Alternatively, other scholars have suggested that the similarities between the two can be related to both traditions citing organic materials, such as basketry (*e.g.* Hurcombe 2008: 102-

[13] *Current dating would seem to favour in Scotland a decline of Impressed wares around the time of Grooved Ware (Sheridan pers comm.) (Table 2.2)*
[14] *see Wilkin 2013 for recent discussion of Food Vessels and Peterborough Ware.*

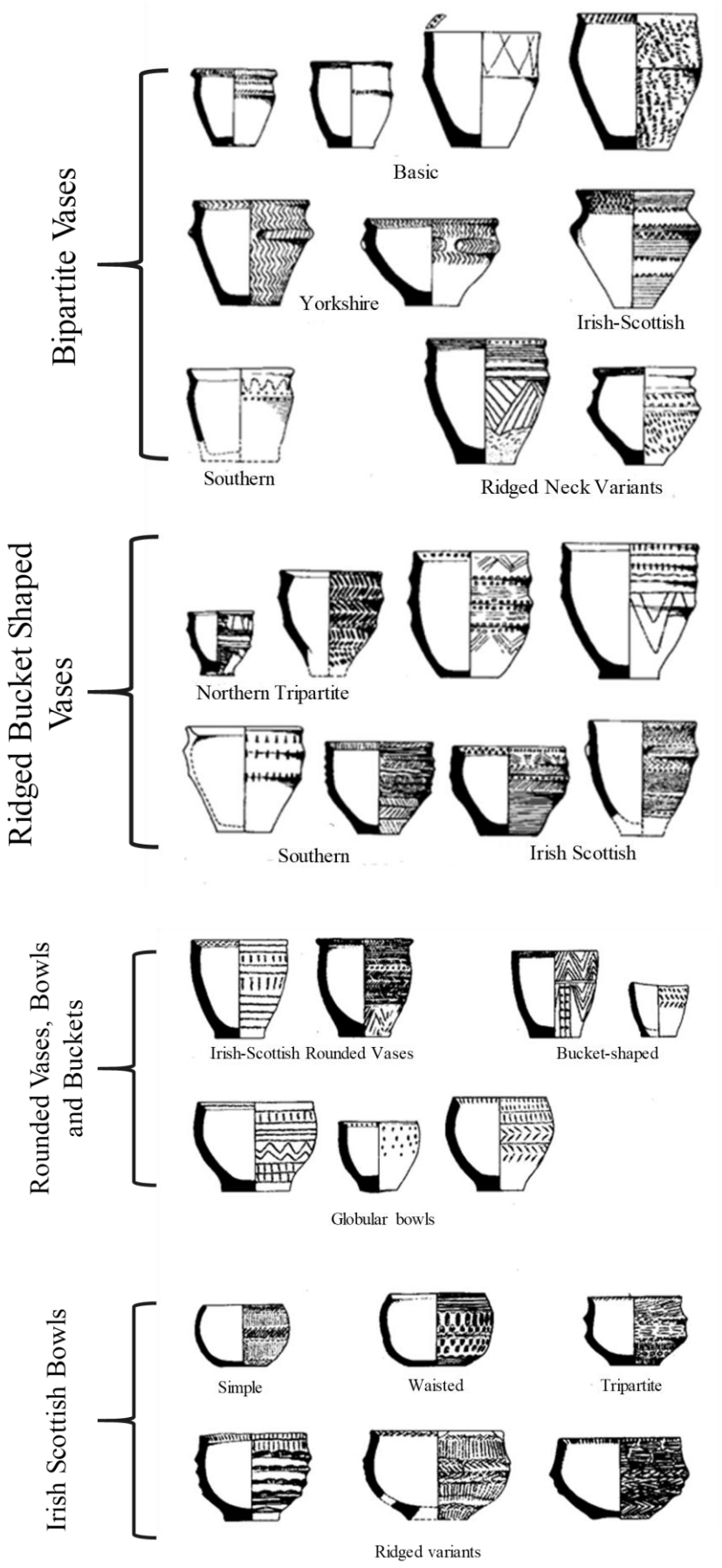


Figure 2.9: *Regional varieties of Food Vessels (after Burgess 1980a:88-9)*

3). References to basketry can be detected among earlier Grooved Ware vessels, notably those of the Durrington Walls style (Fig. 2.6).

Regional groups of Food Vessels include Yorkshire Vases, Irish Vases and Bowls (Burgess 1980a: 87; Gibson, A. 2002: 95; Megaw & Simpson, D. 1979: 230-236) (Fig. 2.9). Irish Bowls encompass several varieties of highly decorated vessels, measuring 8-15cm in height and external rim diameters of 11- 17cm. These distinct vessels have traditionally been viewed as the earliest of the Food Vessels, developing from or co-existing with Beakers (*e.g.* Waddell 1976: 286-8; Brindley 2007: 250)[15]. Brindley's dating of Irish Bowls reinforces their primacy in the overall sequence of Food Vessels, overlapping closely with the widespread use of Beakers (*ibid.*: 172-4) (Fig. 2.8). These distinctive bowls have a limited distribution, restricted predominantly to Ireland and the north of Britain (Brindley 2007: Chp. 25). Irish Bowls have been recorded in funerary contexts across Scotland, including from the Kilmartin region in Argyll (Campbell, M. *et al.*1963: 50)[16]. Kilmartin forms a key locus of activity during the later 3rd millennium, with early finds of Beakers, including the Upper Largie vessel (Fig. 2.2), and later finds of jet and copper (Sheridan 2012c; Jones, A. 2011; Cook *et al.* 2010)[17]. The recovery of Irish Bowls from funerary contexts in Scotland mirrors the situation in Ireland where they are mainly recorded from burials (Ó Ríordáin & Waddell 1993: 19)[18]. Beakers, unlike other parts of Britain are rarely found in funerary contexts in Ireland, occurring instead in chambered cairns and occupation sites (Waddell 2010: 152; Carlin & Brück 2012: 199)[19]. Decorative motifs on Food Vessels overlap closely with Beakers suggesting a degree of sharing and overlap between the two. This overlap extends to metalwork where comparable motifs, including multiple chevrons, can be observed (Taylor, J. 1970; Wilkin 2013: Figure 2.9)

Yorkshire Vases, synonymous with northern England, are defined primarily by the presence of grooved shoulders, often infilled with lugs (Kitson-Clarke 1937: 52; Manby 1957; Gibson, A. 2002a: 96; Megaw & Simpson, D. 1979: 230) (Fig. 2.9). These vessels are typically under

[15] *Brindley argues though that Irish Bowls could have emerged independently without any influence from Beakers, highlighting the presence of comb decoration among Irish pottery prior to the adoption of Beakers (2007:169-76, 328-9). As highlighted by Wilkin this argument potentially overlooks the overlap in other areas between Irish Bowls and Beakers (2013: 60-1)*

[16] *Whilst several Scottish bowls find parallel with Irish examples, there are several forms which appear to be unique to Scotland (Brindley 2007: Fig. 134; Burgess 1980a: 88-9)*

[17] *Activity includes the previously mentioned burial from Upper Largie and Beaker fragments from Poltalloch, Argyll (Sheridan 2012c: 174-178).*

[18] *In Ireland, Irish Bowls and Vases have been recorded from possible domestic or ritual sites (Ó Ríordáin & Waddell 1993: 5, 25).*

[19] *Similar patterns are observed in the Western Isles (Garrow & Sturt 2017: 22)*

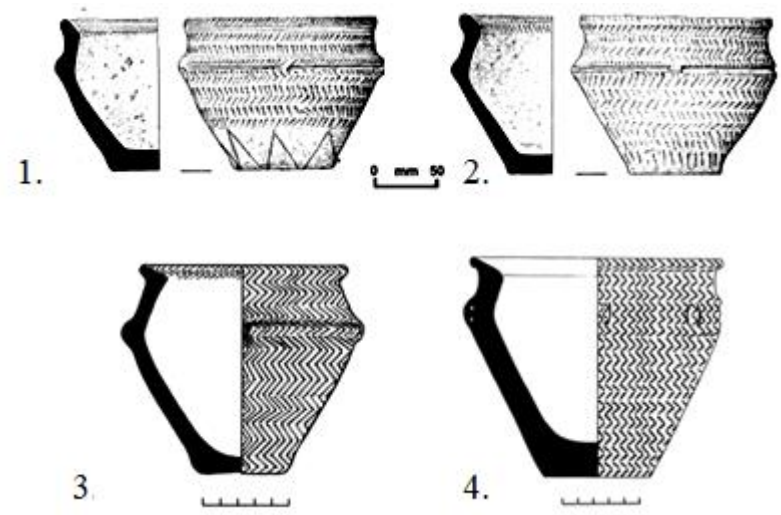


Figure 2.10: *Scottish Food Vessel Vase and Irish Vases:*

Key: ***1., 2.*** *Holly Road, Fife (Lewis & Terry 2004: Illus 14)* ***3.*** *Bredagh Glen, Co. Donegal (Ó Ríordáin & Waddell 1993: 256)* ***4.*** *Carrowntober East, Co. Galway Ó Ríordáin & Waddell 1993: 263)*

Wilkin 2013	England: 2195-2045 1905-1740*
Model 2 (95%)	Scotland: 2130-2040 End date 1925-1830
Brindley 2007	Stage 1: 2020/ 1990 - 1920
	Stage 2: 1920 – c. 1830
	Stage 3: c. 1830 -c. 1740

Table 2.4: *Dating of Food Vessel Vases from Britain and Ireland*

**Wilkin Model 1 suggests a comparable date to the range for Scottish Food Vessels – starting c. 2130-2040 (Table 2.2)*

Later Irish Vases sport well defined necks, a feature shared with Beakers, but as stressed by Brindley a direct connection between the two is unlikely (see Brindley 2007:189).

20cm tall and decorated with a variety of techniques including whipped and twisted cord. Visually these are comparable to Irish Vases, sharing aspects of form and decoration, notably the use of all over herringbone motifs (Wilkin 2013: 100) (Fig. 2.10). Chronologically early Irish Vases, belonging to Brindley's Stage 1 (Table 2.4), are comparable to British Food

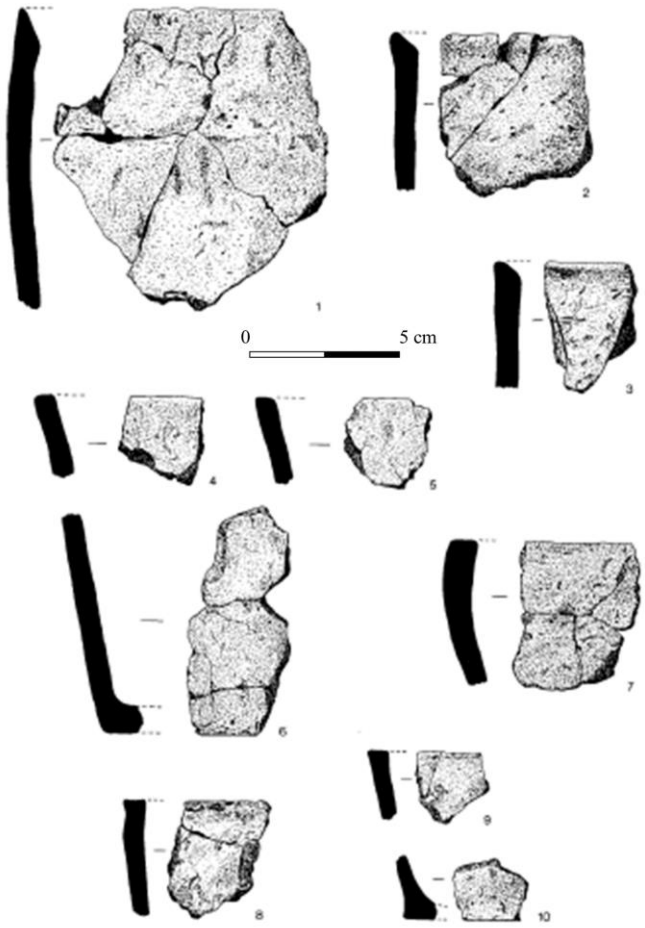


Figure 2.11: *Flat rim ware from Ormiston Farm, Fife (Sheriff 1989: Illus 5)*

Vessels, suggesting important connections between the two (see Wilkin 2013: Section 2.7) (Table 2.4). As noted previously, this includes the exchange of metal between the two regions. Despite these outward similarities there are subtle differences in the position of concave cavetto zones and the shape of the upper body (Wilkin 2011b: 65) (Fig, 2.10). As highlighted by Wilkin, this suggests that both traditions retained a degree of independence despite their similarities (2013: 65). The notion of vessels being similar but different, highlights the difficulties in simply matching comparable vessels without understanding wider contextual factors.

Alongside these regional types,-a range of loosely defined vessels are used, including rounded vases, globular bowls and bucket-shaped vessels (Burgess 1980a: 90; Kitson-Clarke 1937) (Fig. 2.9). The latter include forms that outwardly resemble Grooved Ware vessels of the earlier 3rd millennium (Cowie, T. & MacSween 1995: 54). Plain, undecorated vessels are common across the study area, forming the bulk of the assemblage in Orkney and parts of the Highlands (**Section 2.5.2**; see also **Chapters 5** & **8**). These have in the past been grouped

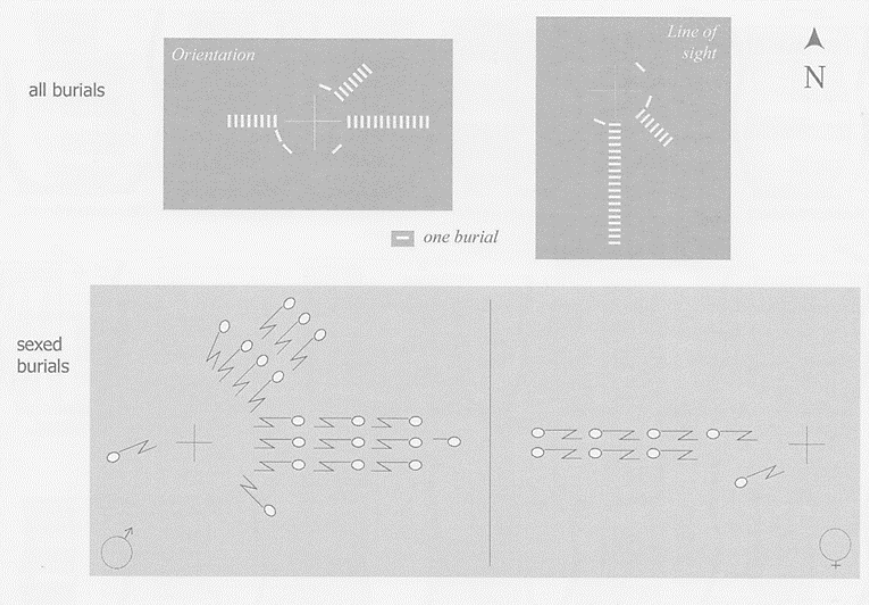


Figure 2.12: *Orientation of bodies associated with Beakers from northeast Scotland (Shepherd, A. 2012: Figure 17.3)*

under a variety of labels including 'flat rim ware'[20]. The term 'flat rim ware' encompasses a variety of bucket/ tub forms that in some regions could be related to Grooved Ware (*e.g.* Cowie, T. & MacSween 1999: 54) (Fig. 2.11). These are found in both funerary and domestic contexts. Benton employed the term to describe the undecorated components of 3rd to 1st millennia assemblages (1931). Since its initial definition the term has been used to describe a wide variety of pottery types dated to the 3rd to 1st millennium BC (Coles, J.M. & Taylor, J. 1970: 96; Sheriff 1988: 108). This includes pottery from Ormiston Farm, Fife (Fig. 2.11), with plain bucket / tub vessels with bevelled and plain rims to the bucket/ tub and wide vessels from the Orcadian burnt mounds at Liddle and Beaquoy (Hedges 1977) (Fig. 7.17) As noted by Hedges the expansive nature of the term, encompassing a variety of pot types, demonstrates the inappropriateness of the term as a typological group (1977: 69; see also Halliday 1989: 108). Instead it can be argued that the vessels encompassed under this label represent a long-lived series of utilitarian forms, fulfilling a range of everyday roles (**Section 2.2** & **3.3.3**)

Burials during this period range from inhumation to part-burnt inhumations and cremations (Gibson, A. 2004a; Brück 2004a, 2004b, 2014; Fowler 2013a; Jones, A. 2008; Garwood 2007). Ceramics are deployed in a variety of ways within these contexts, in several cases being associated with other artefacts, including daggers and jet objects. In certain cases, burials

[20] *See SCARF for further discussion of current research gaps and 'flat rim ware', http://www.scottishheritagehub.com/content/42-ceramics*

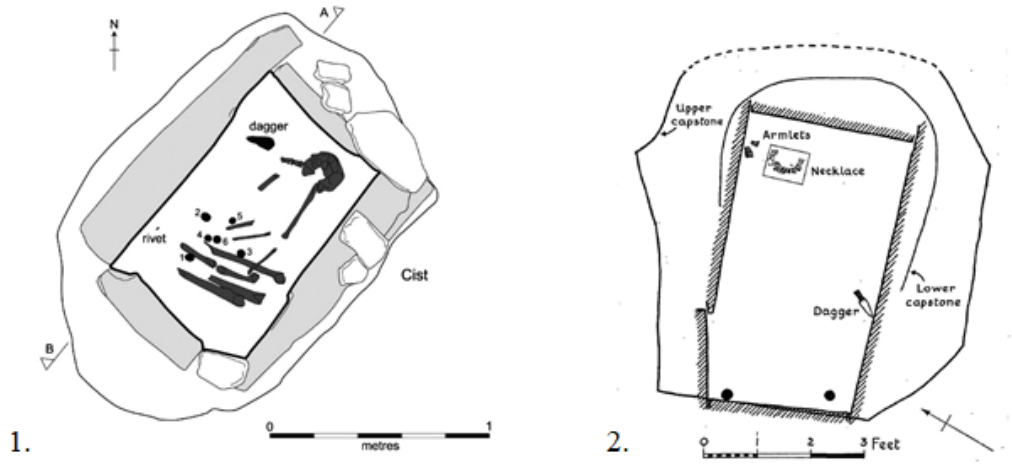


Figure 2.13: *Examples of dagger graves from Scotland*

Key: ***1.*** *Rameldry, Fife (Baker et al. 2003: Illus 2)* ***2.*** *Masterton, Fife (Henshall & Wallace 1965b: Fig. 1)*

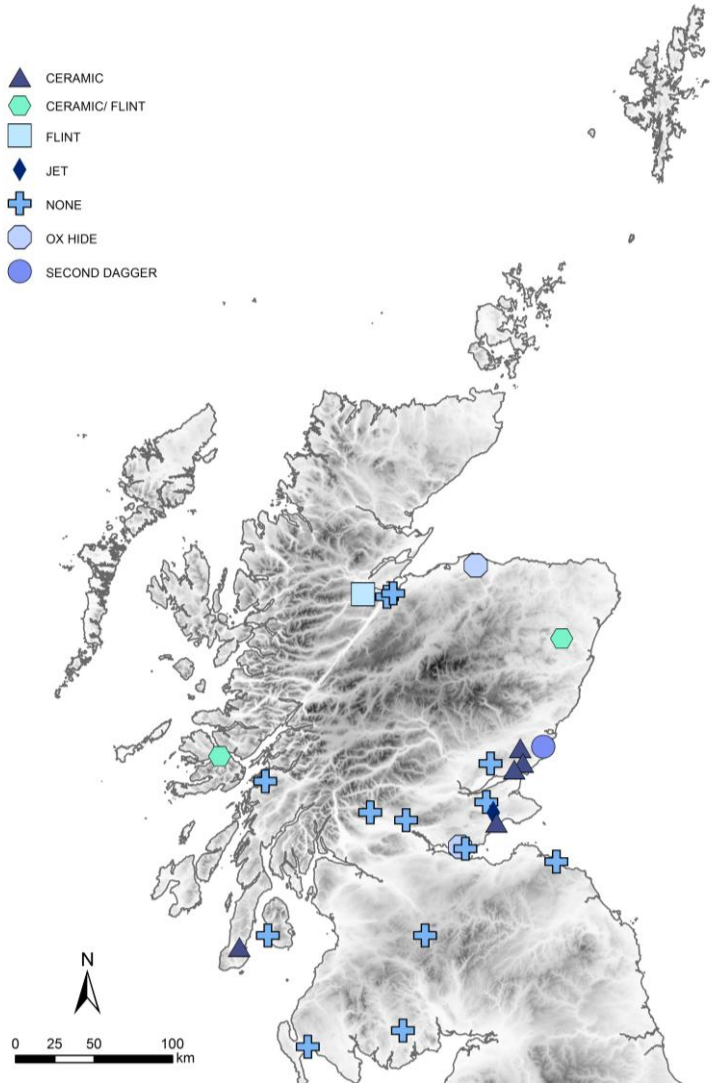


Figure 2.14: *Distribution of dagger graves and associated grave goods in Scotland, excluding probable or uncertain examples*

include multiple grave goods comprising items of equipment and/ or adornment (*cf.* Clarke, D.V. *et al.* 1985; Woodward & Hunter, J. 2015). Inhumations are frequently placed in stone-built cists in the north, though flat graves and log/ coffin burials are known (Wilkin 2011a; Hunter, F. 2000; Jones, A. 2008: 186-189; Brück 2004b). Burials with Beakers often exhibit evidence for strong patterning in the posture and orientation of the human remains (Tuckwell 1975; Shepherd, A, 1989, 2012; Salanova 2003)[21]. These include divisions based on age and sex (Curtis & Wilkin 2016; Shepherd, A. 2012). In the northeast of Scotland and east Yorkshire, males show a bias towards being placed on their left side orientated east. Females, in contrast show a preference for being lain on their right-hand side, orientated west (Shepherd, A. 2012, 1989) (Fig. 2.12). Similar patterns of association and orientation have been recorded from other parts of Europe (*e.g.* Salanova 2003). Divisions can extend to the selection of the pot used in the burial. In northeast Scotland, tall short-necked Beakers show a strong association with male burials (Curtis & Wilkin *forthcoming.*).

Food Vessels are deposited in graves with less consistent patterning in orientations and posture (Tuckwell 1975: 102; Wilkin 2010b: 18, 2011a: 85). There are notable differences in the layout and associations of burials with Food Vessels and Beakers in certain regions. In Yorkshire, noticeable contrast occurs in placement of vessels, with Beakers positioned in front of the head, and Food Vessels behind (Lucas 1996: 110; *cf.* Tuckwell 1975). In other areas of Britain high degrees of overlap occur, with burials with Beakers and Food Vessels sharing aspects in common (*e.g.* Fowler 2013a: 232). In the north of England this includes the positioning of vessels within the burial and the location of burials in the wider landscape (*ibid*; Fowler & Wilkin 2016: 122).

Male burials form the bulk of the available material (Brück 2004a, 2006, 2014; Lucas 1996: 108). Among these, there is a recurrent association with 'rich' grave assemblages comprising multiple artefacts (Clarke, D.V. *et al.* 1985). Among these are 'dagger graves', with single or multiple daggers made of bronze, rather than copper (Figs. 2.13 & 2.14). Alongside changes in raw material, a range of new dagger forms are used, including butt-riveted daggers[22]. Metal for these items continued to be supplied from Ross Island but other sources, including mines in Wales, were likely in use (see Timberlake 2012). In addition to the dagger an array of other artefacts were included such as necklaces and armlets (Fig. 2.13). Other grave goods include

[21] The quality of age and sex information, alongside information on orientation and placement is limited in many cases (cf. Brück 2014), and other patterns beyond those outlined here may be yet unrecognised

[22] Daggers, whilst commonly recorded from grave assemblages, are also found as part of hoards and single finds (cf. Henshall 1968)

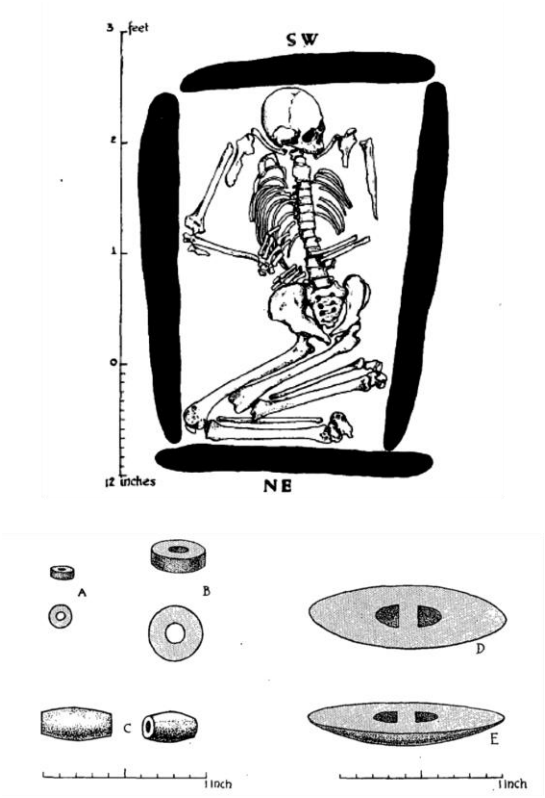


Figure 2.15: *Female burial, beads and jet button from Culduthel, Inverness-shire (after Low 1929)*

jet buttons as at Rameldry, Fife (Baker *et al.* 2003) and jet beads at Masterton, Fife (Henshall & Wallace 1965b) (Fig. 2.15). Alongside these a variety of other grave goods are employed in burials, including battle axes and flint daggers (Needham 2005: 205-209; Woodward & Hunter, J. 2015). The presence of these 'rich' grave goods has frequently been interpreted as signalling the presence of a male elite (Cowie, T. 1988: 18-19; Needham 1996a: 128). As noted by Fowler, this relies on a specific reading of the evidence, which imposes modern definitions of wealth and status onto the past (2013: 90) (see **Chapter 3**).

'Rich' female assemblages are known from several sites including Culduthel Mains, Inverness-shire. The cist excavated in 1928 contained a crouched female and a set of jet beads and buttons (Low 1929) (Fig. 2.15). Exotic items of jet (disc bead necklaces, spacer plate necklaces; see **App. H2**) are frequently recorded from female burials during the period alongside bronze awls (Woodward & Hunter, J. 2015: 519; Downes 2012: 22) (**App. H2**). Bronze awls are often found in association with Food Vessels (*cf.* Baker *et al.* 2003; Henshall 1968: 178-194). These burials coincide with an increased visibility of female burials *c.* 2200 BC. This increased visibility appears to overlap with the introduction of bronze smelting

(Curtis & Wilkin 2012: 247). In parts of northeast Scotland, bronze is frequently found with Beakers and to a lesser degree Food Vessels (Needham 2004, 2005: 203). These include bronze daggers alongside pins/ awls and flat axes (Needham 1996: 126). In the northeast, these developments have been related to the Migdale-Marnoch bronze manufacturing tradition[23]. Metal appears to have been exchanged across the Great Glen via Kilmartin, whose wealth has been suggested to have been based on controlling this flow of metal (Sheridan 2008a: 66). Alongside these connections across to Ireland, other important connections can be observed including Yorkshire, where high concentrations of Food Vessels have been recorded (Needham 2004: 235-40, 1996: 130; Curtis & Wilkin 2012).

In summary, the period from 2300-2000 BC is one of expanding and changing networks alongside increasing regionalism. This includes the emergence of multiple regional varieties of Beakers and later Food Vessels. In Scotland, the latter reflect closely on links with Ireland, including the exchange of metal and other materials. There are clear elements of overlap between the two traditions notably in the use of shared motifs and elements of form. Burials include a range of grave goods and can exhibit strong patterning in orientation and alignment, although regional variations within these can be detected. In Northumberland, this extends to notable distinctions between alignments in Food Vessel burials compared to Beakers (Fowler & Wilkin 2016:124). The inclusion of 'rich' grave goods, notably daggers, has frequently led to interpretations of the period as one dominated by a male elite (Brück 2014: 119, 2004a: 309). As highlighted by Brück, this is based on a straightforward reading of the evidence, which precludes the notion of perishable material goods and other forms of gender representation (*ibid.*).

In 2011 during excavation of a cist at Whitehorse Hill, Devon, fragments of basketry, animal pelts, and wooden studs were noted (Jones, A.M, 2016). In parts of Scotland, examples of organic materials have been recorded at Forteviot, Perth & Kinross (Noble & Brophy 2016) and Langwell Farm, Sutherland (Lelong 2014). In Orkney, grass mats are frequently recorded in the late 3rd to 2nd millennium (**Section 7.4.2**). This demonstrates that a wide range of categories of burial, extending beyond the inclusion of a pot, were in use during the period. Individuals buried with pots represent only a small percentage of the overall population, raising questions of why particular individuals were buried in certain ways. From across Scotland, large numbers of unaccompanied burials, either in cists or without, have been

[23] *The Migdale Marnoch tradition is one of several metalworking phases falling at the end of the Mount Pleasant stage dated to 2500-2000 BC (see Parker Pearson 1999: Figure 5.1). The tradition is named after two hoards at Migdale, Sutherland and Marnoch, Banff.*

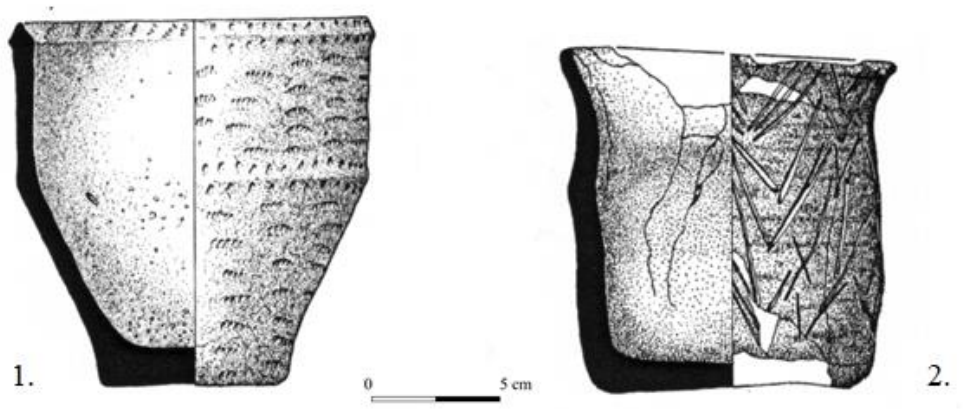


Figure 2.16: *Examples of vessels with late dates previously classed as Beakers (after Sheridan 2007b: Fig. 11.7)*

Key: ***1.*** *West Water Reservoir Cist 7, Peebles* ***2.*** *Barns Farm Cist 4, Fife*

documented, but these remain poorly understood with few dated examples (Downes 2012: 104). Subtle approaches that examine ideas of relations and burials need to be considered, alongside exploring the relationship between different categories of burial. These relationships reflect on important processes of choice, which in turn relate to wider notions of individual and group identity (**Section 3.3**). One final point of note is the general absence of children in narratives of the period. Evidence for child burial is rare in part due to problems of preservation (Downes 2012: 105; see papers in Sánchez *et al.* 2015). Children, where recorded, appear to be more frequently associated with Food Vessels (Wilkin 2011a: 86), as appears to be the case with females in the Highlands (Mason *pers. obs*.).

2.4 2000-1800 BC: Pots and Cremations

From 1900 BC, Beakers are rarely recorded in funerary contexts. When they occur, they comprise a series of poorly defined vessel forms, often lacking defined sinuous profiles. Vessels are decorated with a range of techniques, including incision (Needham 2005: 210.; Curtis & Wilkin *forthcoming*.) (Fig. 2.16). These have varyingly been described as referential and weak carinated, reflecting on the difficulties of classifying these vessels. Difficulties in classifying these vessels is furthered by their sharing or blending of attributes from other traditions, including Food Vessels (Fig. 2.16.1). This has created a degree of ambiguity in classifications, raising questions over when something is a Beaker and when is it not (**Section 3.3**).

This shift towards poorly defined forms has its roots in the preceding period, with the diversification in ceramic types employed in domestic and funerary spheres (Needham 1996: 131). This is coupled with the continued decline of inhumation as the primary funerary rite (Brück 2014: 120; Sheridan 2007a: 165; Parker Pearson 2009: 114**)**. Cremation has often been viewed as indicative of lower status when compared to inhumation (Brück 2009: 2; Downes 2005: 7). Consequently, the frequent association of women with cremation in contrast to males who show a preference for inhumation, has reinforced ideas that women held lower positions in society (see Brück 2009). Cremation burials can, however, be highly ordered, suggesting that the equation of status with burial rite is not always appropriate (Downes 1999; Brück 2014; Brittain 2006; Barrett 1990). As with inhumation, there are clear processes of selection

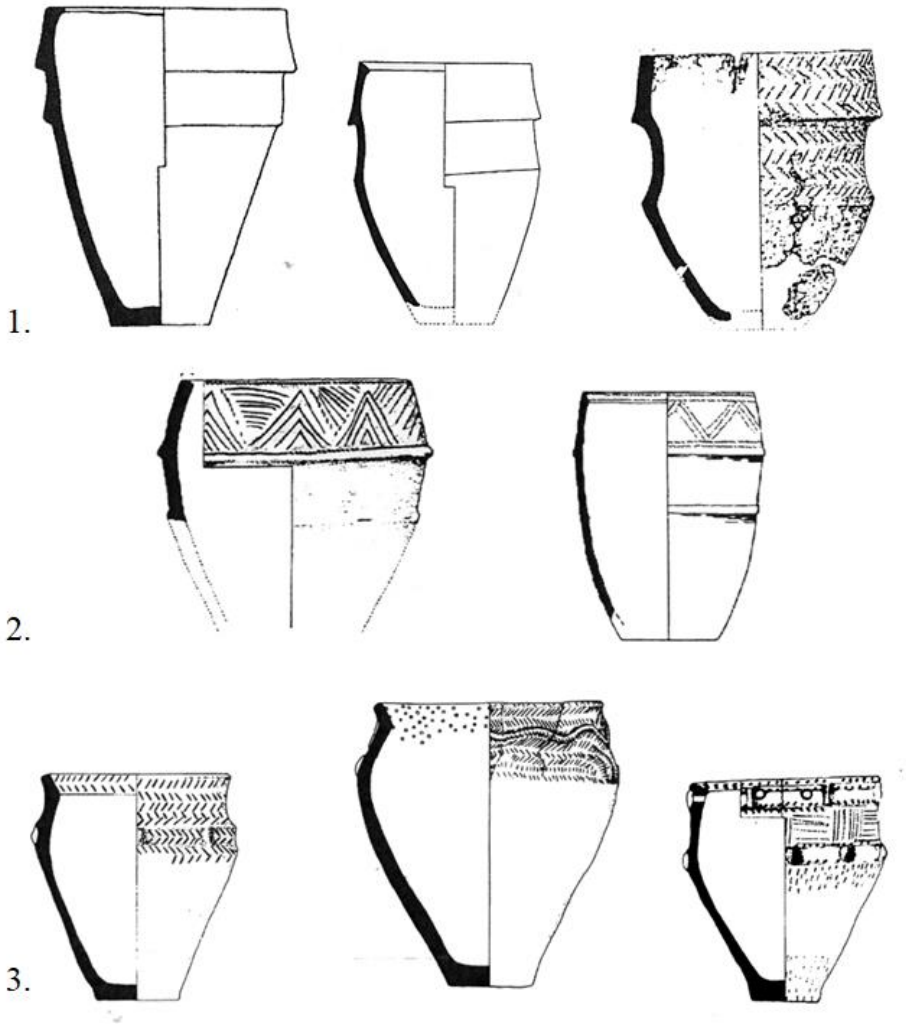


Figure 2.17: *Collared, Cordoned and Food Vessel Urns of the late 3rd and early 2nd millennium (after Sheridan 2003: Fig 14.2) (not to scale)*

Key: *1.* *Collared Urns* ***2.*** *Cordoned Urns* ***3.*** *Enlarged/ Food Vessel Vases/ Urns*

Collared Urns (N. England & Wales) ♠	*1900-1700 cal BC* *(Woodward & Hunter, J. 2015: 462)*
Cordoned Urns (N. England & Wales)	*1750-1500 cal BC* *(Woodward & Hunter, J. 2015: 462)*
Food Vessel 'urns'	*2200 – 1700/1600 cal BC* *(Wilkin 2013: 42)*

Table 2.5: *Dates for Collared, Cordoned and Food Vessel Urns*

♠ *In Scotland similar date ranges have been suggested, with Collared Urns in use c. 2000/ 1950 BC, probably adopted from England, and Cordoned Urns from the 19th century (Sheridan 2003, 2007)*

and deposition involved, reflecting on broader social concerns (Brück 2014: 138) (**Section 3.3.4**). Cremations can be placed within or covered by a ceramic vessel, in some cases multiple individuals are placed in one pot (Parker Pearson 1999a: 7). Among the types used are a suite of 'cinerary urns'[24] including Collared Urns, Cordoned Urns, Food Vessel Urns/ Vase Urns (Cowie, R. 2005; Brindley 2007; Law, R. 2008; Longworth 1984) and Encrusted Urns (Parker Pearson 2009: 109) (Fig. 2.17, Table 2.5).

Food Vessel Urns are defined by Cowie as measuring over 200mm tall (1978: 23). While similar in form to smaller Food Vessels, these larger examples are categorised differently. Vessels are primarily associated with cremations, acting either as containers or covers for remains (Gibson, A. & Woods 1990: 160). This suggests the existence of multiple categories of Food Vessels, in part based on their functional properties and associations. In a domestic context, the greater size range of Food Vessel Urns implies a potential storage role, with smaller vessels fulfilling roles in the preparation of food and drink (**Section 3.3.3**). Included within the broad title of Food Vessel Urns are Encrusted Urns, defined by their use of plastic decoration (see Waddell 1975; Kavanagh 1973). As with Food Vessel Urns, these are typically associated with cremation, often placed upside down, covering the remains (Kavanagh 1973: 509; Thurnam 1871: 377). Encrusted Urns are not limited to funerary use and have been

[24] *Cinerary urns denote a range of containers used in cremation burials. Not all cinerary urns are made from clay, stone versions are known. Notable among these are steatite vessels from Shetland and Orkney.*

recorded from domestic contexts (*e.g.* Cowie, R. 2005: 76; Waddell 1975: 22) (**Section 2.5.2**). Cordoned Urns date to the 19th-16th century BC, lying at the very end of the period under study (Table 2.5)[25] . Cordoned Urns are defined principally by one or more cordons placed on the exterior (Fig. 2.17.2) and are found in Ireland, Scotland, parts of Wales and West England (Burgess 1980: 93; Waddell 1995; Morrison 1968). They are frequently found in funerary settings, being primarily associated with flat cremation cemeteries in Scotland (Sheridan 2007a: 169; Bradley 2011: 177). Alongside the use of Cordoned Urns, these funerary settings find parallel to sites in Ireland. Parallels between the regions suggest that connections with Ireland continued to remain important into the 2nd millennium (Vander Linden & Wilkin 2015: 110). Cordoned Urns have also been recorded from domestic contexts (see below).

Collared Urns are defined principally by their overhanging rims, ranging from simple to complex forms (*cf.* Law, R. 2008; Longworth 1984) (Fig. 2.17.1). As with Cordoned Urns, Collared Urns are found in both funerary and domestic contexts. Where recorded from funerary contexts, vessels are principally associated with cremation burials[26]. In Scotland, they are in use from *c.*2000-1900 BC, overlapping with Collared Urns from other parts of Britain and Ireland (Barrowclaugh 2010; Sheridan 2007a: 164; Brindley 1995) (Table 2.5)[27]. Past interpretations have alternately viewed Collared and Cordoned Urns as related or unrelated (Longworth 1984: 44-6; Waddell 1995: 113). Recent studies have suggested a closer relationship between the two. Sheridan proposes that Cordoned Urns in Scotland developed in response to Collared Urns around the 19th/ 18th century BC (2003: 208). Alternatively, Brindley suggests that Cordoned Urns emerged as a late style within the Collared Urn tradition (2007: 229), echoing earlier statements by Abercromby (1912: 23)[28]. Difficulties in dating lend further support to the highly regional nature of these vessels, reinforcing the need for subtle and integrated regional approaches.

Although the label suggests a high degree of uniformity, it is probable that the tradition, as with Food Vessels, represents a range of regional types (*cf.* Law, R. 2008). In England connections have been drawn between Impressed Wares and Collared Urns (Longworth 1984: 19; Smith, I.F. 1956). As discussed previously, the current dating of Impressed Wares shows

[25] *The earliest dated Scottish example of a Cordoned Urn is from a cremation in association with a vessel from Seggiecrook, Aberdeenshire dated to 1940 to 1680 cal BC (Sheridan 2003: 220)*
[26] *Longworth lists only 25 cases where a Collared Urn accompanied an inhumation (1984: 47)*
[27] *Reliable dates for Collared Urns limited to 35 examples (see Sheridan 2007a for a review: 164). 18 of these dates derive from the cemetery site at Skilmafilly Aberdeenshire (Johnson, M. & Cameron 2012)*
[28] *Brindley cites the vessels from Skilmafilly as one such example of this process, alongside the vessels from Lesmurdie, Banff (2007: 315). For details regarding the cremation cemetery at Skilmafilly see Johnson, M. & Cameron 2012.*

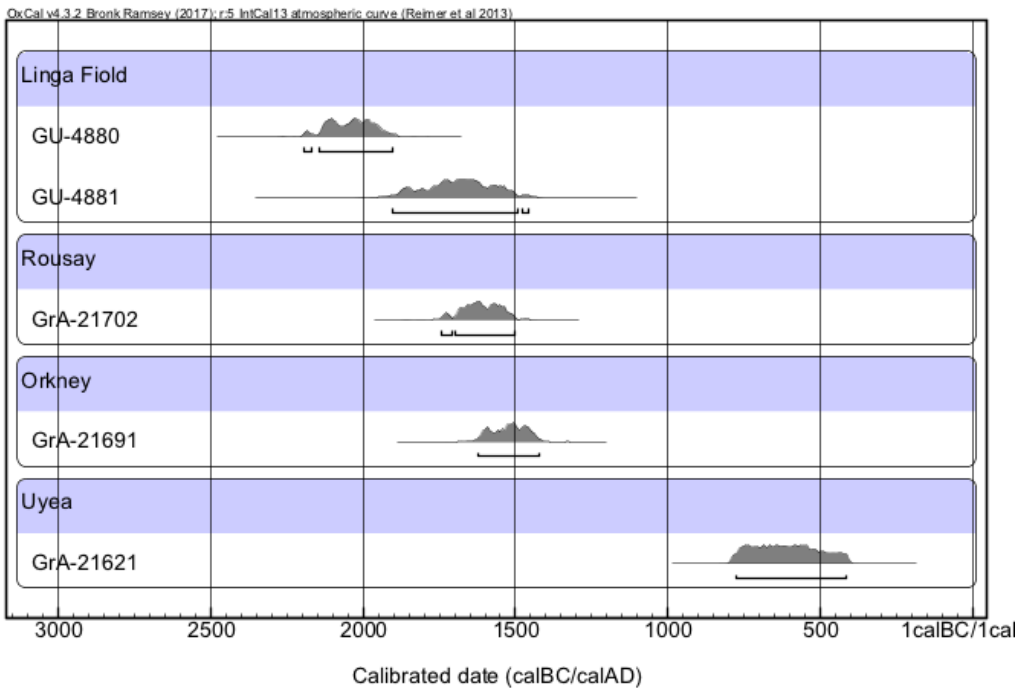


Figure 2.18: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for steatite vessels from Orkney and Shetland (after Sheridan 2003) **

Dates are available for the site at Loth Road, Sanday, Orkney but none of these directly relate to the steatite vessel (Sharman 2007:6) (see **Section 7.4.5)*

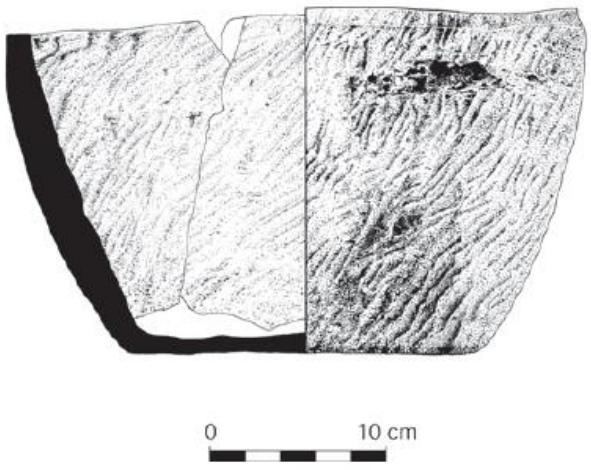


Figure 2.19: *Steatite vessel from Loth Road, Sanday, Orkney (Sharman 2007: Illus 10)*

that a direct link between the two types seems unlikely (see Kinnes & Woods 1997). A similar degree of overlap is observed with Food Vessels. In his study of Collared Urns, Law highlighted the modular nature of pottery, demonstrating how elements could be added particularly around the neck to create either Food Vessels or Collared Urns (2008: Chp. 5) (see

Section 4.2.1). Crucially, as recently highlighted by Wilkin, the relationship between the two types is regionally varied, with regions demonstrating a range of different trajectories and interconnections (2013: 54). As will be further examined in **Chapter 3**, there is a tendency to view pots as part of single evolutionary strands, moving from one type to another. This homogenising view, as will be seen in the case of domestic vessels, masks the variability and range of processes taking place at various scales.

Alongside these there are a range of regional types, often encompassing a series of plain biconical or bucket tub forms (*e.g.* Burgess 1980: Fig. 3.3; Morrison 1968: 83-5). In her review of Scottish Cinerary Urn dates, Sheridan defined examples from the Northern Isles as their own distinct group. This includes examples that have aspects in common with Food Vessel Urns (**Section 6.3.3** & **7.4.3**). In the Northern Isles, steatite vessels are commonly used from the 2nd millennium onwards (see Sheridan 2003a: 213). The term 'steatite' denotes a range of metamorphic rocks composed primarily of talc (Bray, I. *et al.* 2009: 4). Shetland appears to have been the principal source of steatite during the period. Several steatite quarries and outcrops have been identified, showing evidence for long standing use (see Bray, I. *et al.* 2009 for details) [29]. Steatite vessels have been recovered from across the Orkney Isles, dating to between 2350–1400 BC (Sharman 2007: 23) (Fig. 2.18)[30]. Numerous examples have been recorded from Shetland in funerary and domestic contexts (Sharman 2005: 39). Steatite forms

Figure 2.20: *Accessory vessels from South Ronaldsay, Orkney far left. Middle vessel from Dunbar, East Lothian, far right from Old Penrith, Cumbria (Anderson 1886: Fig. 47)*

[29] Although other sources of steatite are known from Scotland including Sutherland, these do not appear to have exploited until the Iron Age (Bray, I. et al. 2009:6)

[30] The bulk of the dated examples lie outside the time frame of this study (see Sheridan 2012: 172), and the only vessel included in the following discussion is the vessel from Mound 8 (Whoom), Quandale (ORK14), Rousay, Orkney, which lies early in the sequence.

tend to mimic their clay counterparts with straight sided or angled vessels (Sharman 2009:43) (Fig. 2.19). Alongside this there is a considerable range of other irregular forms (*ibid.*; Sharman 2005: 43). Such vessels could reach large proportions as at Linga Fiold, Mainland, Orkney, where two vessels were joined to create a vessel 630mm high (Sharman 2004)[31].

One final category of pottery in use during the period is a diverse group of miniature vessels, pygmy cups or accessory vessels. These overlap with the use of Cordoned and Collared Urns, occurring across Britain and Ireland (Barrowclaugh 2010). Accessory vessels encompass an eclectic mix of small cup-like vessels and miniature versions of Collared Urns or Food Vessels (Longworth 1984: 50-7). These vessels may have been employed as part of the funerary rites, being placed onto the pyre itself (Gibson, A. 2004b: 284, see also Jones, A. 2013). Dating this group is difficult, owing to the rather eclectic nature of the material and a general paucity of radiocarbon dates (Hallam 2015: 160; C. Copper pers. comm.). In some regions, miniature vessels appear to be in use during the last quarter of the 3rd millennium, extending into the 2nd millennium (*ibid.*). The bulk of the dated Scottish examples span the first half of the 2nd millennium BC (Sheridan 2007a: 173). Within the study area, these vessels are rare, with one stratified example recorded from Seafield West (SH48), Inverness-shire. One unprovenanced example is recorded from South Ronaldsay, Orkney (Fig. 2.20)[32] and a further unprovenanced example is held at Dunrobin Castle, Sutherland.[33]

2.5 Domestic Pottery 2500-1800 BC

2.5.1 Domestic Contexts

Domestic sites have been recorded from several areas of Britain and Ireland (Carlin 2011; Carlin & Brück 2012; Parker Pearson 2009: 112; Sharples 2009; Armit 1996: 88-94). Definable structures are rare, instead sites typically take the form of ephemeral features or midden spreads (Simpson, D. 1971; Gibson, A. 1982, 1984; Megaw & Simpson, D. 1981:

[31] For further details, see Sharman 2009: Fig. 6.8
[32] Sherds of a possible further example were recovered during excavations at the Ness of Brodgar (OR11K). Mainland, Orkney in 2017 http://www.nessofbrodgar.co.uk/dig-diary-thursday-july-20-2017/
[33] The vessel from Dunrobin Castle, described as an incense cup, has a roughly bipartite appearance looking like a miniature urn. The upper part of the vessel is decorated with incised lines arranged in triangles (Scholma-Mason pers obv.)

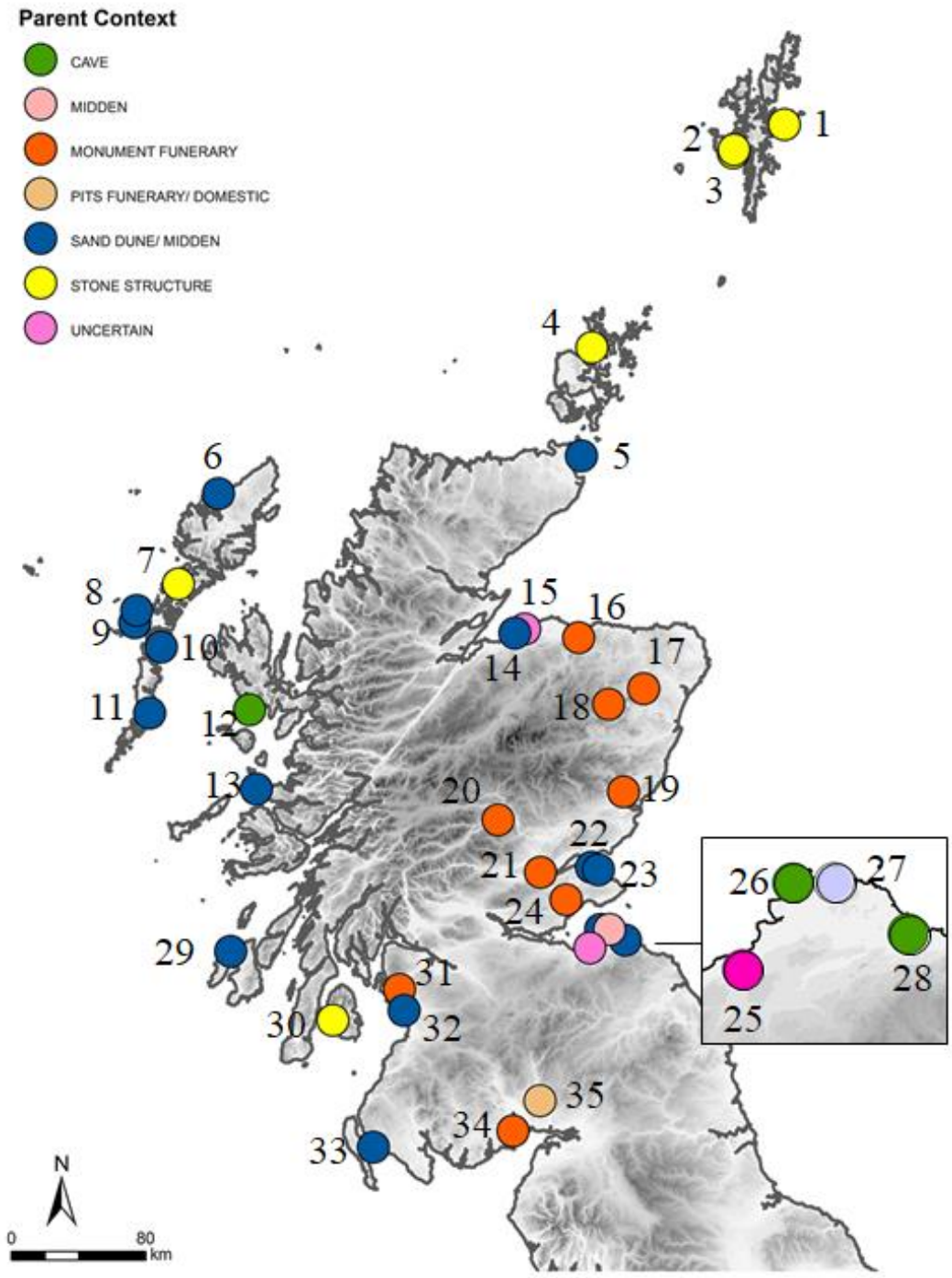


Figure 2.21: *Distribution of later 3rd millennium domestic sites in Scotland (after Gibson, A. 1982) (see Table 2.6 for details). For definition of parent contexts see* ***App. H1***

Site Number *	Site Name	Region	Parent Context	Pottery
1	Benie House	Shetland Isles	Structure	Mixed assemblage incl. examples of 2nd millennium pottery
2	Ness of Gruting (SFI5) (SFI6) (SFI7)	Shetland Isles	Structures	Mixed assemblage – incl. Beakers (see **Section 6.2.2**, **App. B3.5**)
3	Stanydale (SFI11) (SFI12)	Shetland Isles	Structures	Mixed assemblage – incl. Beakers (see **Section 6.2.4 & 6.2.5**, **Apps. B3.2 & B3.3**)
4	Rinyo (ORK16)	Orkney Isles	Structures	Mixed assemblage – incl. Grooved Ware, Beakers (see **Section 7.2.5**)
5	Freswick Sands (NH18)	Caithness	Eroding dune/ Midden spread	Mixed assemblage incl. Beakers, Food Vessels & Grooved Ware
6	Dalmore	Western Isles	Midden spread	? Beaker?
7	Northton	Harris	Structures	Mixed assemblage – incl. Beakers
8	Scalpaig	North Uist	Midden spread	Beaker sherd
9	Paible	North Uist	Eroding dune	AOC Beaker
10	Rosinish	Benbecula	Eroding dune/ Structure	Mixed assemblage incl. Beakers & shouldered jars
11	Gortan	South Uist	Eroding dune	Cord decorated Beaker
12	Rudh an Dunain (SH46)	Western Isles	Cave	Beaker Food Vessel
13	Sanna Bay (SH2)	Inverness-shire	Eroding dune	AOC Beaker
14	Culbin Sands	Morayshire	Eroding dune	Comb dec. Beakers Mix of other vessels (see Gibson, A. 1982: 138)
15	Findhorn	Morayshire	Unclear	Mixed assemblage -? Beaker?
16	Fochabers	Grampian	Pit	3 x Beakers
17	Loanhead	Aberdeenshire	Stone circle	Cord & comb decorated Beaker – poss. incl. small bowl
18	Old Keig	Aberdeenshire	Stone circle	Beaker – comb decorated

Table 2.6: *Scottish domestic sites recorded by Gibson (1982). For definition of parent contexts see **App. H1**)*

Site Number *	Site Name	Region	Parent Context	Pottery
19	Dalladies	Kincardineshire	Pit	? Incised Beaker?
20	Lundin Farm	Perthshire	Cairn	AOC/ Low-carinated Beaker
21	Moncrieff	Perthshire	Stone Circle/ Cairn	?2 x Beakers – AOC?
22	Brackmont Mill	Fife	Eroding dune	AOC Beakers ? Grooved Ware?
23	Tents Muir	Fife	Eroding dune/ Funerary activity	Beaker (incl. AOC) Neolithic pottery
24	Balbirnie	Fife	Stone circle	Grooved Ware Collared/ Cordoned Urns
25	St Germains	Midlothian	Uncertain	AOC Beaker
26	Archerfield	East Lothian	Eroding Dune/ Midden Spread	Beakers (incl. AOC) Grooved Ware ? Food Vessel?
27	North Berwick, Tusculum	East Lothian	Midden Spread	AOC Beakers Impressed/ incised Beakers
28	Hedderwick	East Lothian	Eroding Dune	AOC sherds (range of forms – highly fragmentary) Impressed Wares Grooved Ware
29	Kilellan Farm	Islay	Eroding Dune/ Structure/s	Shouldered Jars Food Vessels
30	Tormore	Arran	Structures	AOC Beaker
31	Court Hill, Dalry	Ayrshire	Pit/ Structures	1 x Beaker (comb dec.)
32	Shewalton Sands	Ayrshire	Eroding Dune	AOC Beaker (single sherd)
33	Luce Sands (Glenluce)	Wigtownshire	Eroding Dune	AOC sherds (range of forms – highly fragmentary) Impressed Wares Grooved Ware
34	Lochhill	Dumfries	Cairn	Sherds from Beakers (? late?)
35	Kirkburn	Dumfries	Pits (incl. cremation)	AOC sherds ? Impressed Wares?

Table 2.6: *Continued.*

191-97) (Fig. 2.13, Table 2.6)[34]. The stone-built structures of Shetland and Orkney are a notable exception to this dearth (Bradley 1970; Megaw & Simpson, D. 1981: 191-7; Simpson, D. 1971) (see below). Examples of timber structures, often comprising a few postholes, have also been recorded from Britain and Ireland (Fig. 2.22). Despite this, the apparent absence of structures has led some scholars to argue that the evidence is either lost or that there were no houses (Brophy 2006: 18; Bradley 1970: 264). Another suggestion is that pastoral and nomadic modes of occupation were commonplace. In this scenario Beaker users were envisaged as pastoral nomads (Simpson, D. 1971: 132). Alternatively, as suggested by the range of occupation evidence, comprising both ephemeral and more substantial structures, a mix of lifestyles may have been pursued, combining aspects of pastoral and sedentary lifestyles (Allen 2005: 220).

In his 1982 review of domestic Beaker sites[35], Gibson recorded around 36 sites from Scotland[36]. In this, sites from the Western Isles account for 27% of the Scottish examples (Table 2.6). This includes the important assemblages from the Outer Hebrides at Rosinish, Benbecula (Shepherd, I. 1975), and Northton, Harris (Simpson, D. *et al.* 2006), alongside those from the Inner Hebrides at Kilellan Farm, Islay, which was not fully published at the time of Gibson's review (Ritchie, A. 2005). These were associated with stone and timber structures. Since this review additional sites have been excavated, including Allt Chrisal (Gibson, A. 1995) and An Doirlinn (Garrow & Sturt 2017)[37] (Fig. 2.23). A further 18 sites recorded by Gibson were coastal dune sites comprising ephemeral deposits, in several cases associated with middens and possible funerary activity (Fig. 2.21, Table 2.6).

Structures

A variety of structures have been recorded from across Britain, encompassing a range of types. These include examples of timber buildings at Lough Gur, County Limerick, Ireland and Belle Tout, East Sussex (Fig. 2.22), but the reconstruction of structures from a few post

[34] Gibson included redeposited material from ring ditches and long cairns in his broad definition of domestic Beaker pottery (1982: 27-49).
[35] This review included sites with Food Vessel and other 3rd millennium pottery types
[36] Since Gibson's review several further domestic sites have been recorded, these include recent work in the Inverness region. At present, there is no updated synthesis of domestic sites from Scotland or Britain.
[37] Additional assemblages include those from Barvas (Cook 1999), Calanais (Ashmore 2016). Cnip (Close Brooks 1995, Dalmore (Sharples 2009), Lewis and Harris. Further examples of later 3rd millennium pottery have been recorded from Barra and the Uist's at Allt Chrisal (Branigan & Foster 1995), the Udal (Armit 1996), Sligeanach (Sharples 2012) Cladh Hallan (Parker Pearson et al. 2004: 50-1), Machair Mheadhanach, Cill Donnain (Hamilton, M. & Sharples 2012) and An Dorlain (Garrow & Sturt 2017)

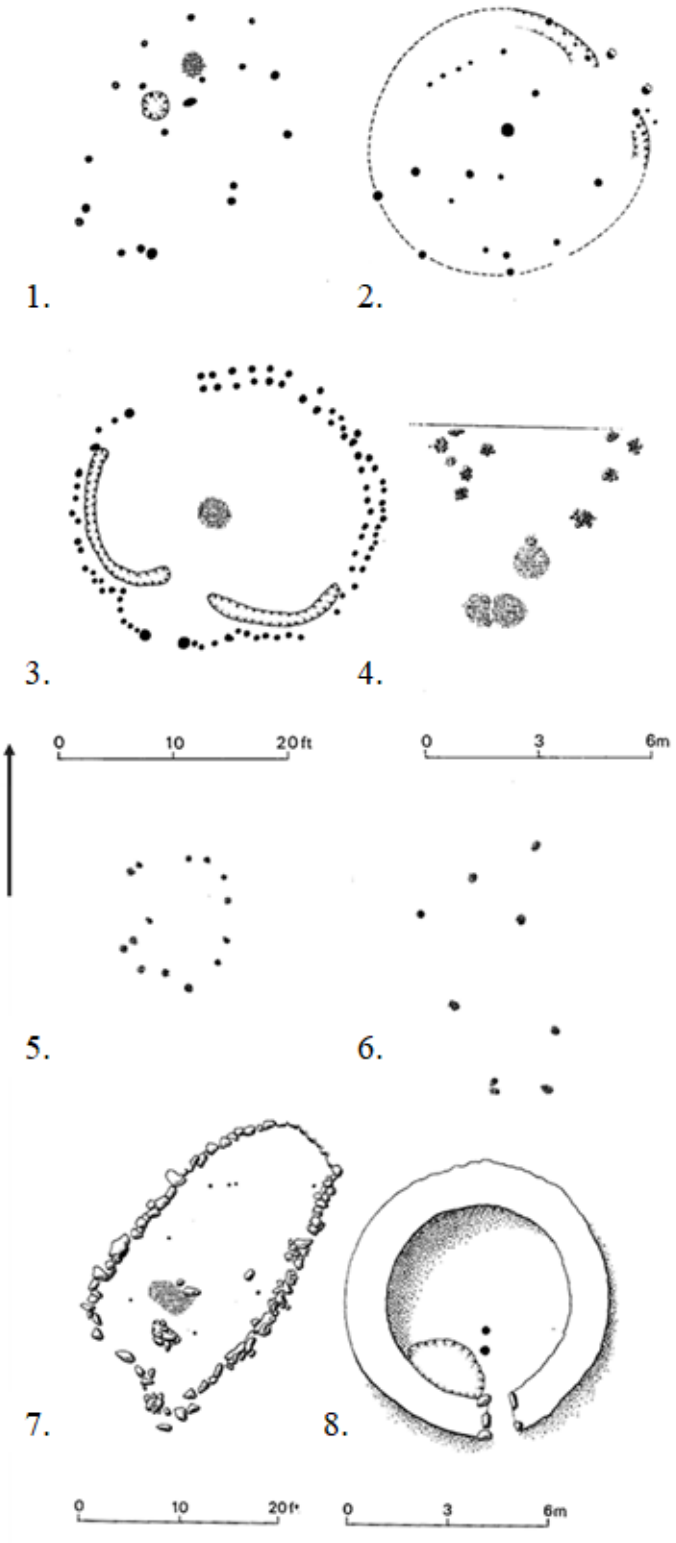


Figure 2.22: *Plans of 'Beaker houses';*

Key: ***1.*** *Lough Gur, County Limerick, Ireland* ***2.*** *Downpatrick, County Down, Ireland* ***3.*** *Gwithian, Cornwall* ***4.*** *Beacon Hill, Flamborough* ***5., 6.*** *Belle Tout, East Sussex* ***7.*** *Northton, Harris* ***8.*** *Woodhead, Cumbria (after Simpson, D. 1971: Fig 23, 24)*

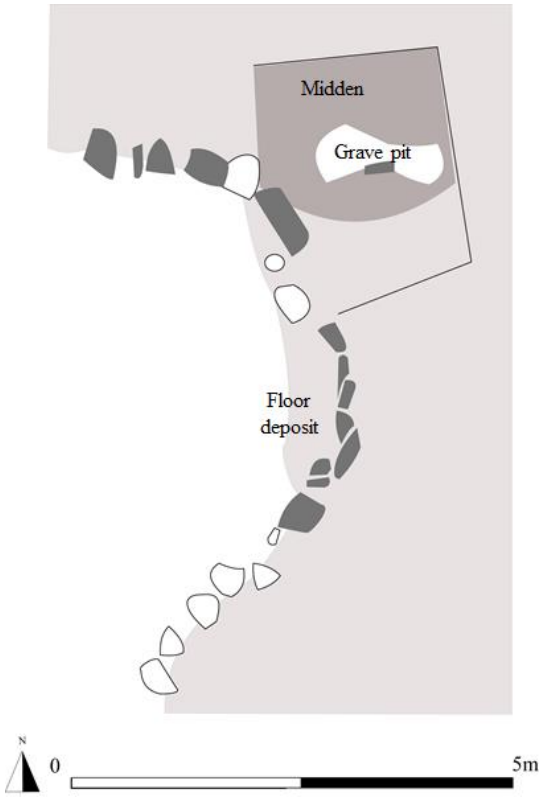


Figure 2.23: *Burial and structure at Sorisdale, Coll (after Ritchie, J.N.G. & Crawford 1978: Fig 2)*

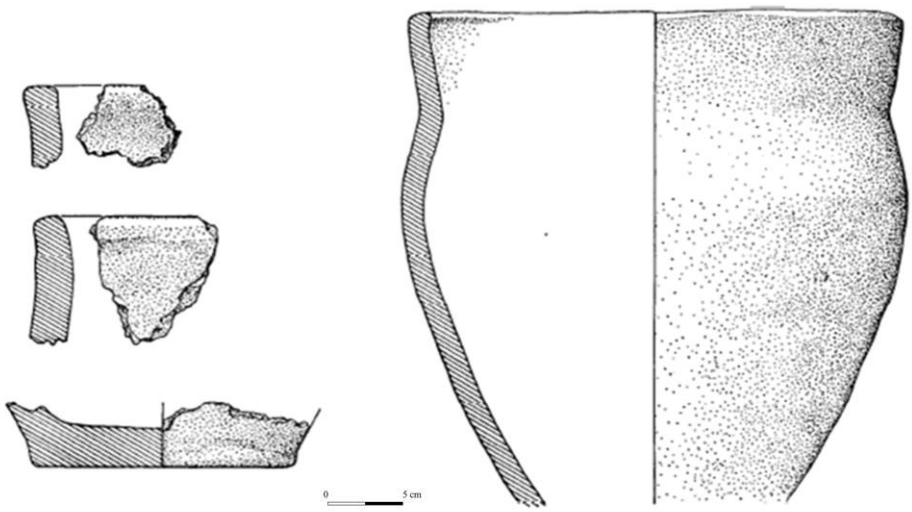


Figure 2.24: *Pottery associated with structure from Sorisdale, Coll (after Ritchie, J.N.G. & Crawford 1978: Fig 3)*

holes is fraught with problems (Musson 1970: 267). Whilst stone-built structures are commonly recorded in the Northern Isles, further examples have been noted in the Western Isle's. At Rosinish, a single u-shaped building was recorded (Shepherd, I 1977), whilst the structures at Dalmore, Lewis and Northton, comprised oval shaped buildings (Sharples 1984:

235; Simpson, D. *et al.* 2006) (Fig. 2.22.7). Excavations at Dalmore revealed a complex sequence of activity, beginning with a sub-oval building, which was progressively modified (Sharples 2009: 148). Underlying the Sorisdale cist the remains of a possible structure were noted, suggesting an earlier occupation phase associated with shouldered jars (Figs. 2.23 & 2.24). At both sites structures were recorded in association with midden and occupation deposits, containing various sherds of pottery and faunal remains. Despite the apparent permanence of these structures recent interpretations have suggested a seasonal pattern of occupation (Sharples 2009: 149: Hamilton, M. & Sharples 2012: 212). As argued by Sharples, this seasonal pattern may explain the complex sequence of building that characterises these sites (2009: 149). Comparable phases of occupation could be proposed in the case of sites in Shetland, which demonstrate a similar multiplicity of phases (**Section 6.2**).

Coastal Dune Sites

Coastal dune sites pose interpretive challenges due to the disturbance and shifting of artefacts by cultural and natural process (Needham 1998: 19; Woodward 2008: 87) (see **Chapter 3**)[38]. Consequently, the stratigraphy of these is often unclear or absent (*cf.* Bradley *et al.* 2015). The association of pottery with ephemeral features presents a range of interpretive challenges with regards to stratigraphy and dating (Gibson, A. 1982: 63). Among these are the complex midden deposits at Archerfield, East Lothian (Curle 1908), Luce Sands (Stevenson 1948; McInnes 1966; see also Thomas, J. 2015) and Hedderwick, East Lothian (Callander 1929; Scott, W. 1951; Stevenson 1948), which produced fragments of AOC Beakers and Grooved Ware (*cf.* Gibson, A. 1982) (Figs. 2.26 & 2.27) (Table 2.6). A similar spatial relationship between Grooved Ware and early AOC Beakers can be observed at sites in the North of England, including Ross Links, Northumberland. Here multiple AOC Beakers have been recorded (Tait, J. 1965; see Case 2001: 367). Due to problems of stratigraphy, the interrelationships of the Beaker pottery to the Grooved Ware, and the overall chronology of these sites is unclear. The presence of multiple ceramic types though suggests that such locations remained key loci of activity over long periods of time. This longevity highlights the importance of coastal sites as points of exchange and connectivity (Bradley *et al.* 2015). Whether this is continuous occupation, or a punctuated series of episodes is unclear. Similar degrees of continuity can be observed at inland sites. At Brackmont Mill, Fife, a full sequence

[38] *Whilst processes of midden formation have been studied including the formation processes at Runnymede, Surrey (Needham & Spence 1996), the processes involved at coastal dune sites remain poorly understood (Cowie, R. 2005: 71).*

from Neolithic to Bronze Age can be observed (Longworth 1968). This included evidence for a cremation cemetery containing Cordoned and Collared Urns alongside surface scatters of probable domestic material (*ibid.*).

At Luce Sands, alongside the mixed ceramic assemblage, there was evidence for imports, including Arran pitchstone, highlighting the role of maritime havens in the distribution and movement of materials (Coles, D. 2011: see also Ballin 2009: Chp. 5). Among the material from Luce Sands was evidence for burials in the dunes (see Bradley *et al.* Table 3). These were associated with cists, cairns and a circular enclosure (Wilson, G. 1888; Davidson, J.M. 1952; Cormack 1968). At Low Hauxley, Northumberland a series of burials were uncovered in association with a cairn (Waddington & Bonsall 2016: 25-31). Pottery from the individual burials included examples of Beakers alongside Food Vessel bowls, vases and urns (Sheridan 2016). Considering this, caution needs to be exercised in solely interpreting finds of pottery from these sites as domestic, instead funerary or other activities could have taken place.

Indeterminate Pit or Midden Spreads

Similar interpretive problems are encountered at indeterminate pit or midden spreads. Whether these are indeed domestic in nature is unclear (Simpson, D. 1971; Gibson, A. 1982: 39; Parker

Type	Title	Description
I	'Background activity' pits	Accidently accumulated material. Few or no finds
II	Unclassified pits	Indeterminate function
III	'Typical' Neolithic pits	Shallow with few fills Deliberately backfilled with pottery, flint, charcoal/ ash and burnt bone
IV	Burial features	Pits where evidence for burial is present
V	Conspicuous consumption	Pits with evidence of conspicuous consumption including flint caches and retouched flints
VI	Structured deposition	Finds in pits show degree of selection
VII	Ceremonial pits	Examples of structured deposition of 'typical' Neolithic assemblages including pottery, flint, burnt bone and charcoal

Table 2.7: *Types of pits recorded at Kintore, Aberdeenshire (after Cook & Dunbar 2008: Table 34)*

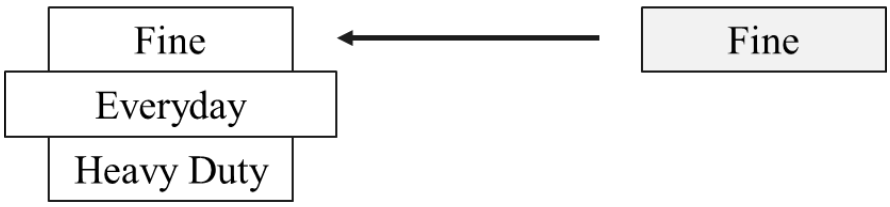


Figure 2.25: *Clarke's model of domestic pottery (after Clarke, D.L. 1974: Fig 2)*

Pearson 2009: 112; Leon 2005: 18-19; Thomas, J. 2012). As noted in **Section 2.2**, pit burials are noted throughout the 3rd millennium. During the excavation of pits at Kirkburn, Dumfries, a range of deposits, including cremations and domestic refuse, were recorded (Cormack 1963, Fig 3; Gibson, A. 1982: 178). At Kintore, Aberdeenshire, a comparable range of pits were noted, including the deep multi-layered pit, P13, containing sherds of a Beaker (V212) (MacSween 2008: 187). The various pit features from Kintore were divided into a range of categories by the excavators (Table 2.7). These categories, whilst broad, articulate the potential range of differences that can be encountered in pit deposits, including their use for burials. The most common type of pit defined by the excavators were those classed as 'background activity pits', containing few or no finds (Table 2.7). These general deposits can be contrasted against more complex pits containing evidence of conspicuous consumption, structured deposition and burial features (Cook & Dunbar 2008: 310-4, Table 34).

2.5.2 Domestic Pottery

Labels and fuzzy sets

In contrast to the pottery found in burial contexts, which can take on an almost stereotyped appearance, domestic pottery encompasses a range of types. Among these are examples of Beakers, Food Vessels, Collared and Cordoned Urns alongside a range of other vessels. As will be shown, these other vessels deviate from the more tightly bound groups defined above, reflecting on insular processes (Millson *et al.* 2012: 19) as well as the wider range of roles undertaken by pottery in domestic contexts. These vessels have been given various labels, encompassing a wide number of types and traits. (Burgess 1995: 150; Gibson, A. 1984: 95; Bamford 1982). These include a suite of undecorated and often undiagnostic vessels (Woodward 2008: 83) and are often difficult to date due to their ubiquitous nature, including examples of 'flat rim ware'. This is further compounded by the poor stratigraphy of most domestic sites (Allen 2005: 20). These undiagnostic vessels tend to form the bulk of domestic assemblages with an emphasis on simple forms (Burgess 1995: 150). This includes a range of

bucket/ tub forms commonly assigned to the broad group of 'flat rim ware' (**Section 2.2**). It can be argued that this relates to the functional roles of the pottery, with 'everyday wares' being employed for short lifetime duties of food preparation and storage (Clarke, D.L. 1974: 463; see Arnold 1988) (see **Section 3.3.3**). As argued in **Chapter 1**, an integrated approach is needed to fully understand the interplay and emergence of different categories of vessel and their function. This includes the role of organic vessels and their relationship to ceramic vessels. Such vessels rarely survive, introducing a notable bias into studies of pottery. In Ireland examples of wooden polypod bowls are known (Earwood 1993), whilst the presence of skeuomorphic elements on Grooved Ware hint at potential baskets and other types. More direct evidence comes from the Early Bronze Age cist at Whitehorse Hill, Devon, where a single basket was recovered (Cartwright *et al.*2016)[39],

The term 'domestic Beaker' has been used to describe a range of vessels. Under this portmanteau term are included vessels comparable to those from funerary contexts to examples which exhibit single Beaker traits such as form or decoration[40] (*e.g.* Sheridan 2016c: 604-5; Bamford 1982: Part IV; Gibson, A. 1982: 69-76). In his innovative study of Beakers, Clarke[41] outlined a tripartite model of domestic pottery in Britain, comprising three functional categories: fine, every day, and heavy-duty wares (Fig 2.25). The vessels from funerary contexts were the finest, defined by fine fabrics, lavish decoration, elaborate forms and often well fired (Clarke, D.L 1976: 462)[42]. Fine wares were interpreted as prestige or specialised items by Clarke (1976) (*cf.* **Chapter 3**). An inherent flaw in this approach is the continued focus on fine wares, isolating them from the wider assemblage. This fails to consider process of abstraction, including the interrelationships of domestic to funerary material (*e.g.* Needham 2005: 175; Case 1995: 56-9). This problem is reiterated in examinations of domestic Beaker, where the focus is on defining 'Beaker' components at the expense of other undiagnostic material (Gibson, A. 1984: 74; see also Millson *et al.* 2012). This includes the role of plain bucket/tub vessels which are common during the period. As Burgess notes, given the importance placed on Beaker pottery, "*even the thickest, crudest, most un-Beaker like vessels, are described as 'domestic Beaker*" (1980a: 69). This has often resulted in discussion of the

[39] Other examples include Late Neolithic wooden bowls from Etton, Cambridgeshire (Taylor, M. 1998: 155) and the organic materials from Must Farm, Cambridgeshire http://www.mustfarm.com/bronze-age-settlement/about/

[40] At Calanais, Isle of Lewis Sheridan divides the Beaker assemblage into fine, comprising thin walled and small to medium sized pots (100-200mm), and domestic, vessels with thicker walls and coarser fabrics (2011c).

*[41] Clarke's Beaker scheme is reviewed further in **Section 3.2.2***

[42] Whilst this is true for many Beakers, coarse fabrics are well documented (Boast 1995: 71).

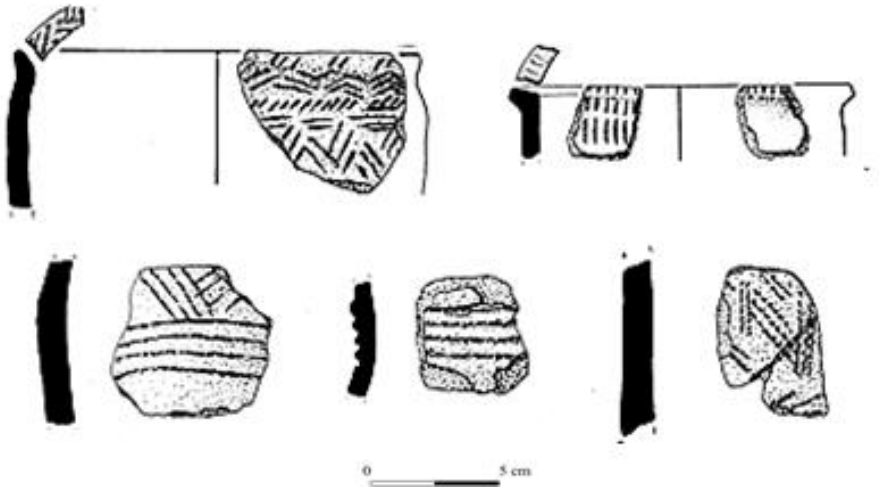


Figure 2.26: *Cord impressed and incised sherds from Culbin Sands, Moray (after Gibson, A. 1982: 371)*

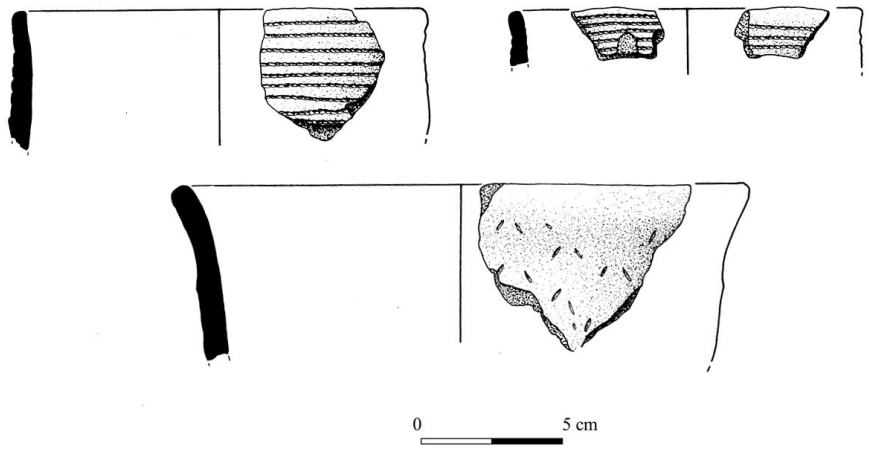


Figure 2.27: *Cord and fingernail impressed sherds from Hedderwick, East Lothian (after Gibson, A. 1982: 433-4)*

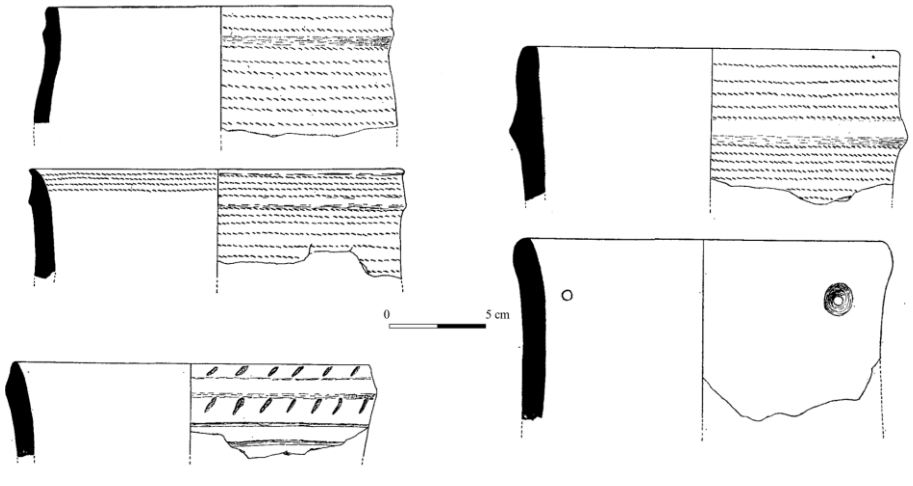


Figure 2.28: *Cord impressed and incised sherds from Luce Sands, Wigtown (after McInnes 1966: Fig.11)*

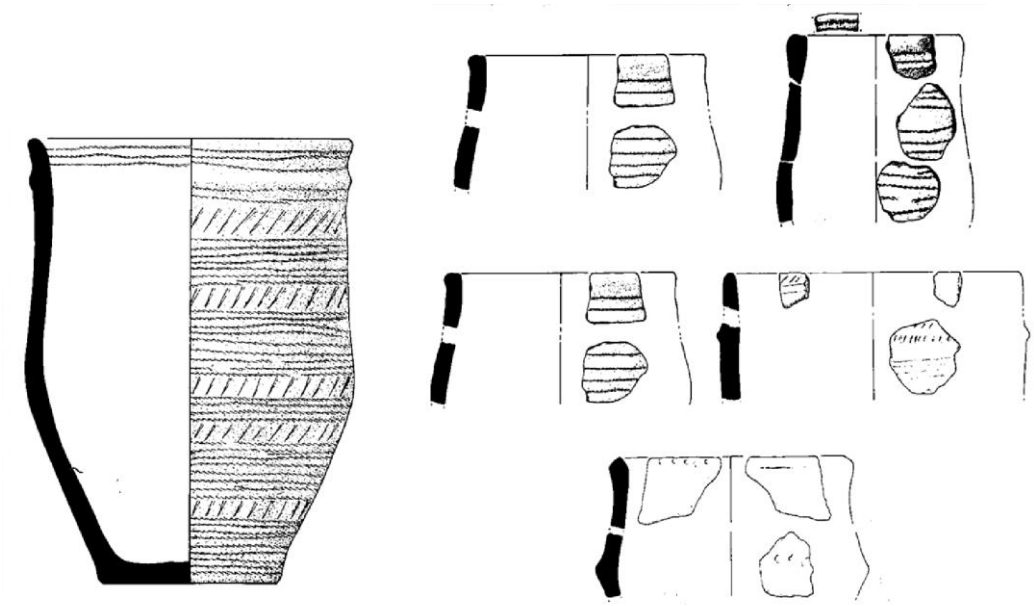


Figure 2.29: *Cord and comb impressed sherds from Allt Chrisal, Barra (after Branigan & Foster 1995: Figure 4.38) (not to scale)*

degree to which a vessel is a Beaker or not (*e.g.* Sheridan 2013: 58). This includes coarse sherds with what is typically described as rusticated decoration, where the surface has been roughed up with fingernail or fingertip impressions (Gibson, A. 1980; Bamford 1982: 74-82; Clarke, D.L. 1970: 58). Similar decoration occurs on Grooved Ware vessels, including at Littleour, Perthshire dated to 2350-2030 cal BC, but the integrity of this date has been questioned (Sheridan 1998: 27-8).

Alternative approaches eschew the term 'domestic Beaker' in favour of regional labels (*i.e.* Sharples 2009), or – as at the Milfield Basin, Northumberland – as "*Neolithic Derivative*" (Millson *et al.* 2012: 19). Similar problems of definition are encountered in defining late Beakers from funerary contexts, which, in contrast to earlier types, encompass a range of traits (Needham 2005) (**Section 2.3**). These 'fuzzy' types reference "*rather than fully embody, the Beaker tradition*" (Wilkin 2010b: 18). A narrow focus on defining vessels as Beaker or not obscures the regional nature of the pottery and causes terminological confusion (Millson *et al.* 2012: 19). The use of labels has tended to obscure the processes by which categories of pottery emerged, and were subsequently stabilised (Jones, A. 2012: 189; Van Oyen 2015b: 31, 2015a: 63-4; Sørenson 2015: 88-9; see also Jervis 2014). This includes the significance and interrelationships of the material, especially to preceding ceramic types, such as Grooved Ware (see Case 2001: 369-72; Gibson, A. 1982: 80-3).

In the following section I will outline examples of these various vessels, including the use of AOC and low-carinated vessels in domestic contexts, alongside Beaker and Food Vessel elements found in other Scottish domestic assemblages.

AOC & low-carinated Beakers

A recurrent feature of domestic assemblages is the presence of AOC vessels, which depart in their form and fabric from the more typical low-carinated forms found in funerary contexts (Clarke, D.L. 1970: 57-9). Examples of AOC vessels are widely documented from sand dune sites and other occupation sites in Scotland (Fig. 2.21) (Table 2.6). These include notable concentrations in the Ardnamurchan region (SH2, SH3), Luce Sands (McInnes 1966), Archerfield (Curle 1908) and Hedderwick (Stevenson 1948; Callander 1929: 35-6; see Gibson, A. 1982 for an overview). AOC sherds are common among Hebridean assemblages: at Allt Chrisal, Barra they form 45% of the 'Beaker assemblage' (Gibson, A. 1995: 114) (Fig. 2.29). As indicated, the temporal relationship of these AOC vessels to those found in early burials is unclear. At Sorisdale, sherds of coarse pottery, alongside a large plain-necked vessel, were found in a thin layer of midden cut by a non-cist burial containing a low-carinated Beaker dated to 2460-2300 cal BC (Ritchie, J.N.G. & Crawford 1978: 76; Sheridan 2007b: 96) (Fig. 2.24). The large necked vessel finds parallel with examples from Northton and Rosinish (Figs. 2.30 & 2.31). Comparable examples from Northton associated with the Beaker I horizon, are dated to 2140-1740 cal BC (Simpson, D. *et al.* 2009: 90) (Fig. 2.32), whilst those from Rosinish are dated to 2210-1500 and 2140-1440 cal BC (Sheridan 2007b: 120) [43]. This could imply the existence of long-lived domestic forms in use from the 24th-22nd century BC in the Hebrides, but further chronological resolution is required to clarify this sequence.

From Luce Sands, an extensive collection of sherds, ranging from early 3rd to later 3rd millennium types, has been recovered over an extended period (McInnes 1966; Gibson, A. 1982: 192). The assemblage encompasses a range of small vessels analogous to those from funerary contexts, undecorated bowls[44], and large AOC decorated jars (McInnes 1966: 54-6) (Fig. 2.28). These large jars are typically thick-walled with raised sub-rim cordons, in several cases extending to a pair of cordons. Sub-rim cordons are widely recorded from occupation sites. Large sub-rim cordoned vessels decorated with fingernail, rusticated decoration were

[43] *These dates are based on those adjusted by Sheridan to account for marine effect in the dated samples (2007b: 120)*
[44] *Undecorated bowls have also been noted in funerary contexts including Biggar Common (Johnston, D. 1997: 217). See Clarke, D.L 1970: 58, examples include nos.1233, 1643, 1661.1. 1657)*

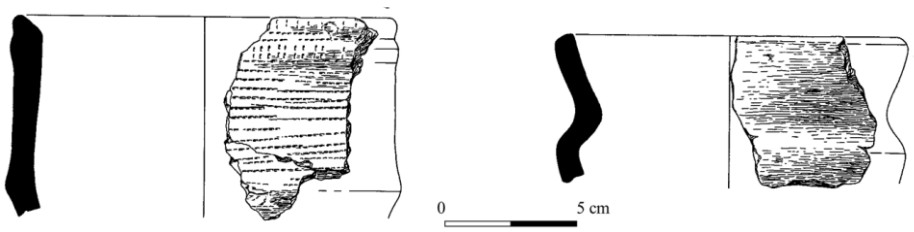


Figure 2.30: *Pottery from Rosinish, South Uist (after Shepherd, I. 1976: Fig. 11.3)*

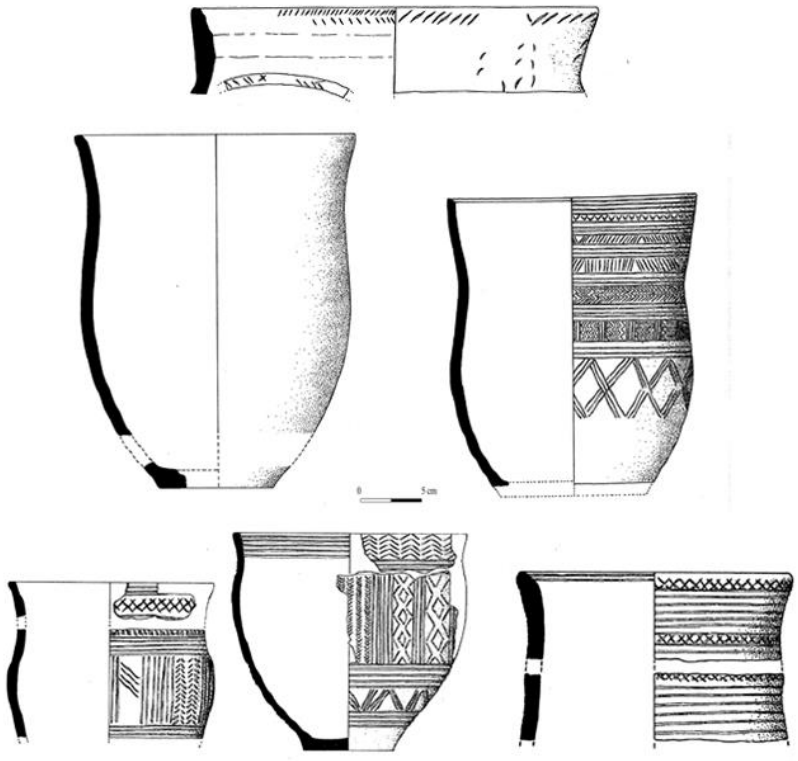


Figure 2.31: *Pottery from Beaker I deposits, Northton, Harris (after Simpson, D. et al. 2006: Figure 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.13)*

recorded from Hedderwick (Gibson, A. 1982: 172) (Fig. 2.27). At Rosinish and Allt Chrisal examples of large vessels with sub rim cordons were recorded (Shepherd, I. 1976:213; Gibson, A. 1995: 114) (Figs. 2.29 & 2.30). Decoration is often restricted to small patches of incision and impressions. At An Doirlinn, South Uist, the large jar B2 was decorated with a single encircling line of fingernail impressions (Copper 2017: 168). The fingernail decoration, or rusticated decoration, of B2 recalls those of potbeakers, which often feature rusticated modes of decoration (Fig. 2.33). The term 'potbeaker' derives from their apparent similarity to Dutch vessels found often in settlement contexts (Fontijn 2010: 85-7). Rare examples have been

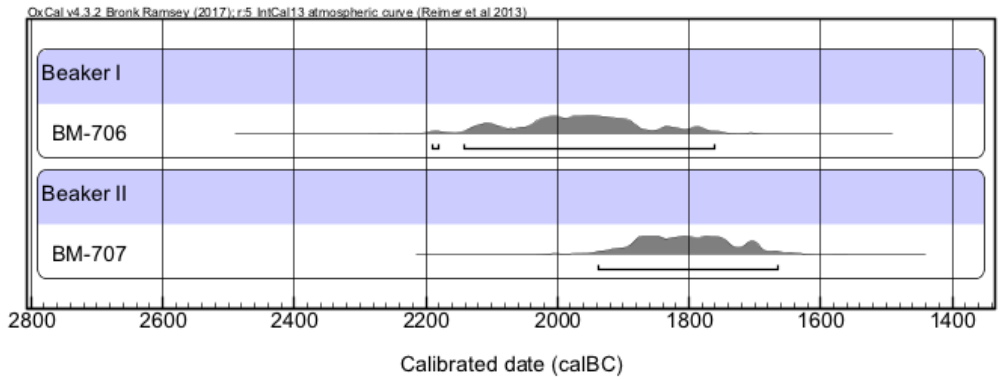


Figure 2.32: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates from Beaker I and Beaker II horizons Northton, Harris (after Simpson, D. et al. 2006: Figure 3.5)*

recorded from burials (*ibid.*; Drenth & Lohof 2005: 442-4). Potbeakers are often described as larger and thicker variants of fine wares found in graves (Gibson, A. 1980, 1982: 75). Vessels are often embellished with rusticated forms of decoration involving the roughening of the surface (Gibson, A. & Woods 1990: 236) (Fig. 2.33). Although common on large vessels, sub-rim cordons are not restricted to these (Wilkin 2016: 271). Clarke interpreted these as having a domestic function (1970: 53). In his review of Beaker pottery, Case suggested that the use of cordons could derive from Grooved Ware, representing an early fusion of different traditions (2001: 369).

Beakers, Food Vessels, and all things between

Alongside these AOC vessels are a mix of pots, which exhibit a range of attributes. These include the presence of what can be described as Beaker and/ or Food Vessel elements. This diversity of form and decoration can be clearly detected among the abundant material from the Hebrides. At Northton, a range of types can be identified, several of which closely overlap with those found in funerary contexts (Gibson, A. 2006: 125; Burgess 1980: 219). Among the defined forms are tall narrow s-profile vessels, either highly decorated or undecorated (Fig. 2.31). The large jars from Sorisdale can be related to this latter group (Fig. 2.24). S-profile vessels at Northton range from those with strongly defined profiles to weakly defined vessels. Large vessels are rare being limited to two examples, with rim diameters of 300mm and 220mm. Other forms include bi-partite and necked vessels, alongside barrel shaped vessels. Among these are a distinct coarse ware element, comprising thick walled coarsely incised sherds. Comparable coarse sherds have been recorded from other Hebridean sites including Sligeanach, South Uist although these were assigned to the Food Vessel tradition (see

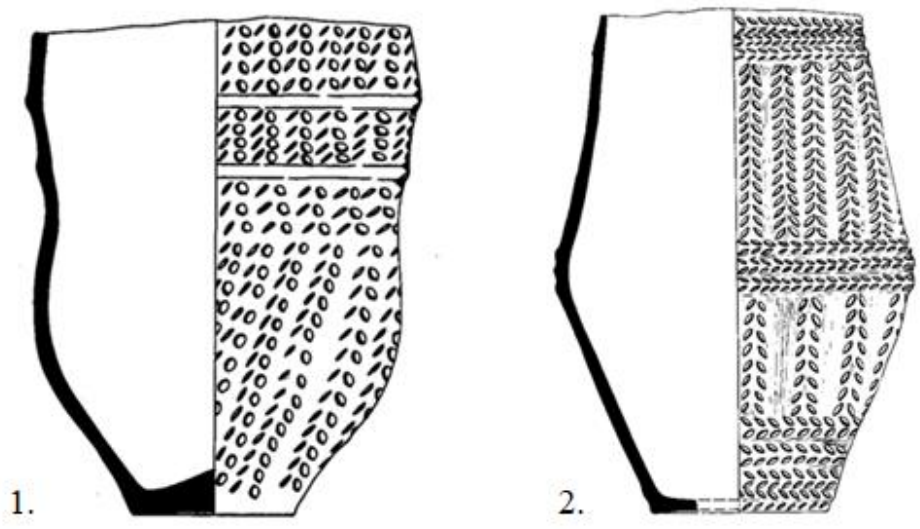


Figure 2.33: *Examples of potbeakers from England:*

Key: ***1.*** *Lion Point, Clacton, Essex (Clarke, D.L. 1970: illus. 915)* ***2.*** *Butley, Suffolk (Clarke, D.L. 1970: illus. 1050) (not to scale)*

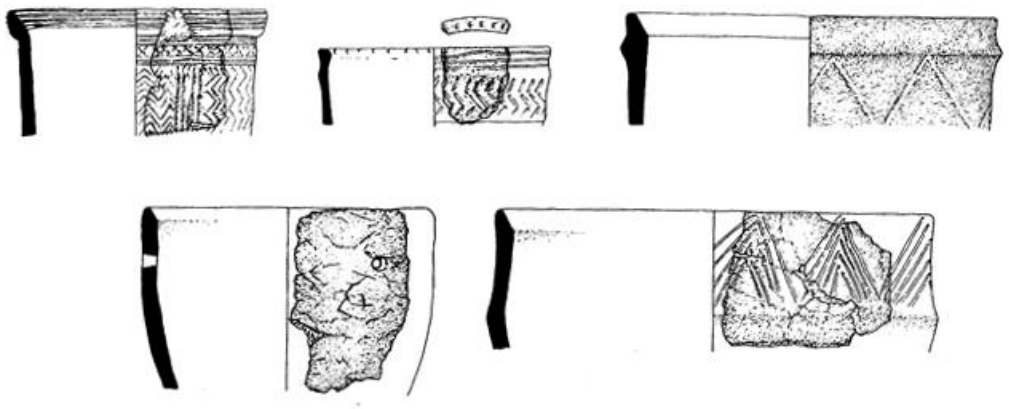


Figure 2.34: *Pottery from Dalmore, Lewis (Sharples 2009: Figure 13.4) (not to scale)*

below)[45]. Incision forms the primary decorative technique at Northton, with chevron motifs occurring widely. One unusual example appears to combine aspects associated with Beakers and Food Vessels, akin to no. 202 from Allt Chrisal (Gibson, A. 1995). The pottery from Dalmore has been described as having Food Vessel affinities, notably in the use of concave zones above the shoulder, alongside examples of almost straight sided bucket/ tub vessels (Sharples 2009: 149, 2012: 234) (Fig. 2.34). Similar vessels are recorded from the nearby site at Ardnave, Islay (Ritchie, G. & Welfare 1984) and Sligeanach (Sharples 2012) (Figs. 2.35 &

[45] *Further parallels can be drawn with the sand dune assemblage from Archerfield, which included a similar mix of vessel forms. (Gibson, A. 1982: 98-100)*

2.36). Sheridan identified a range of pottery at Sligeanach including examples of Beaker pottery decorated primarily by incision[46]. Food Vessels were represented by thick walled sherds, the majority of which were undecorated (2012d: 233). Rims unlike the Beaker sherds were expanded with internal bevels (Fig. 2.36). A comparable range of vessels can be found

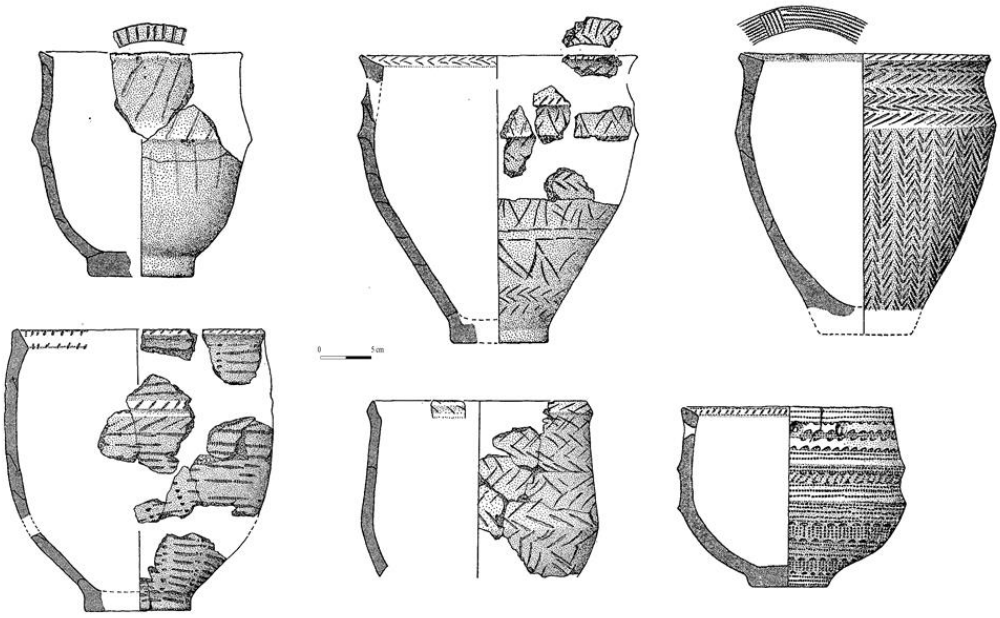


Figure 2.35: *Pottery from Ardnave, Islay (after Ritchie, J.N.G. & Welfare 1984: Fig. 8, 9)*

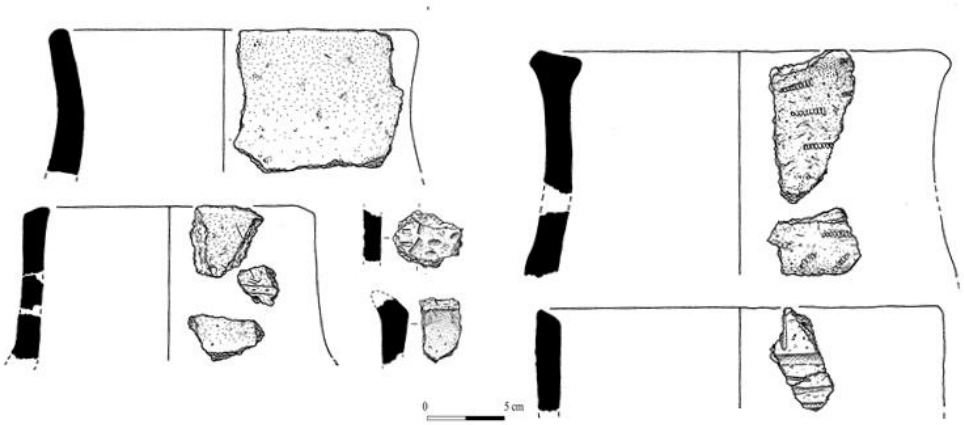


Figure 2.36: *Pottery from Sligeanach, Cill Donnain, South Uist (after Sharples 2012:*

[46] *Healy in her review of the pottery from Fen Edge, South Cambridgeshire, suggested that Food Vessels were employed as heavy-duty wares overlapping with finer Beakers (1996: 112). These large diameter vessels were coarse and friable in comparison to the Beaker element (ibid.: 104). But as Wilkin notes this situation could stem from chronological problems, rather than a direct relationship between the two elements (2013: 11).*

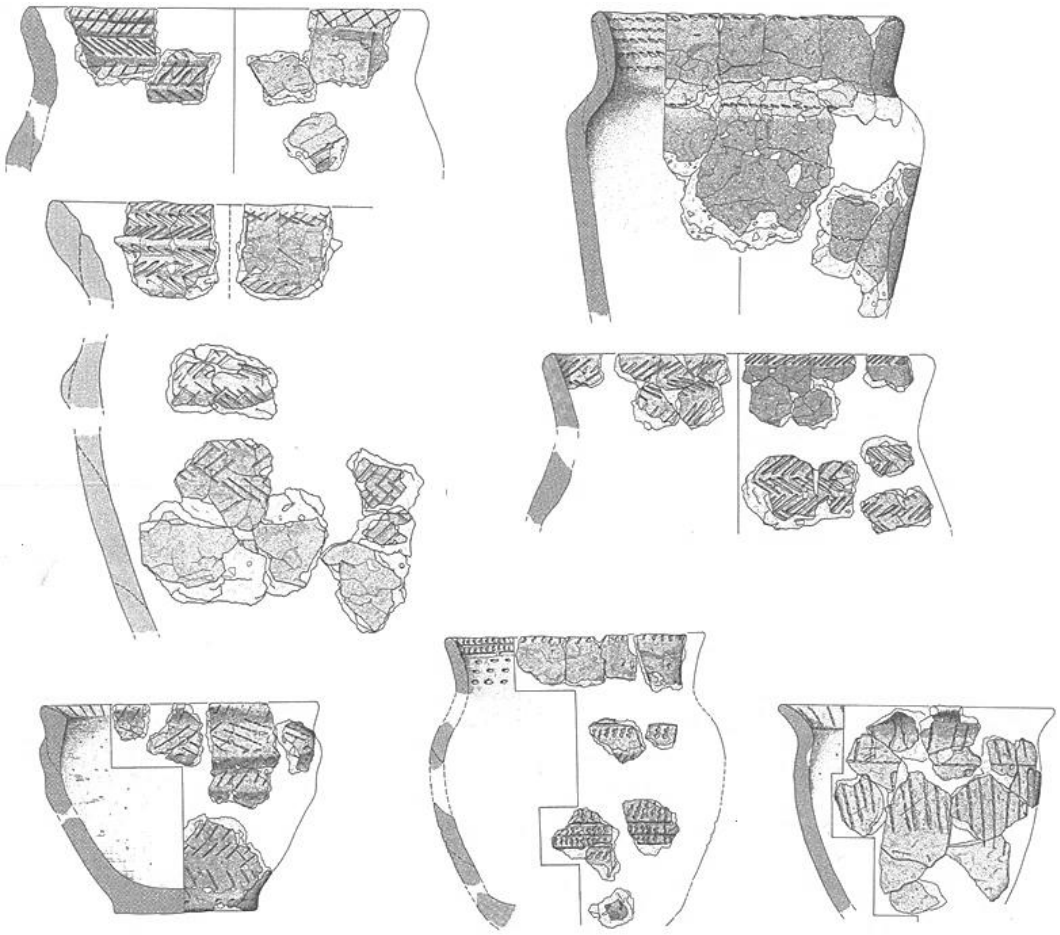


Figure 2.37: *Vessels from Kilellan Farm, Islay (after Ritchie, A. 2005: Figure 61-71)*

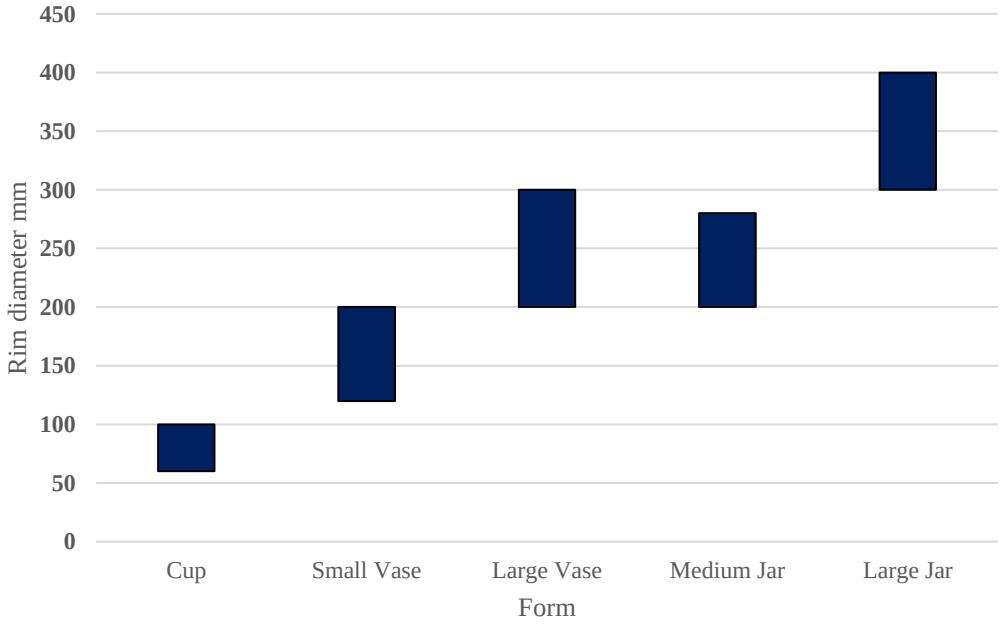


Figure 2.38: *Size ranges of vessel forms not including bowls from Kilellan Farm (after Cowie, R. 2005: Table 4)*

among the pottery from Kilellan Farm, dated to 2140-1740 cal BC (Ashmore 1997: 263).

Forms at Kilellan encompass the spectrum of Food Vessels, including bowls, vases and urns (Burgess 1976[47]; Cowie, R. 2005) (Fig. 2.37). These encompass a range of sizes, reflecting on the probable function of each vessel. Forms range from cups with rim diameters of 60-100mm to large jars with rim diameters of 300-400mm (Fig. 2.38). Of these large vases and medium jars formed the bulk of the Kilellan assemblage. Burgess suggested that plain shouldered vases, akin to those at Kilellan Farm, could have had a wide distribution across the Irish Sea (1976: 204) (Fig. 2.17). The pottery, whilst overlapping in part with Food Vessels, could be viewed as a regional variety of pottery (Cowie, R. 2005: 77 *contra.* Burgess 1976). Indeed, there has been a tendency to treat the vessels from Kilellan as their own distinct type (Cowie, R. 2005: 77), raising questions about the definition of Food Vessels in a domestic context. Similar issues have been highlighted regarding the definition of funerary examples, suggesting that from the outset Food Vessels were highly regional in their outlook, drawing on a wide range of influences and networks.

Collared & Cordoned Urns

As with Food Vessels, occurrences of Collared Urns in domestic contexts are limited. Longworth listed twenty-two examples, but as with Gibson's definition of domestic Beaker

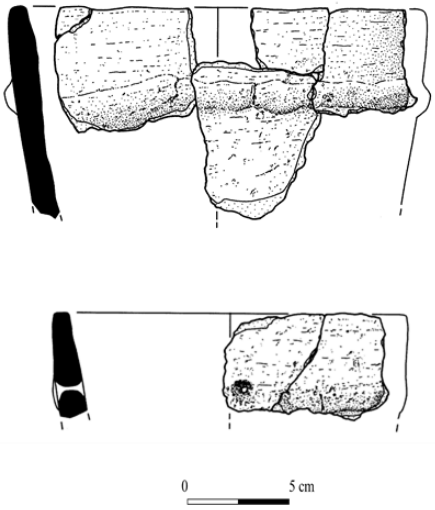


Figure 2.39: *Pottery from Cill Donnain, South Uist (after Parker Pearson & Zvelebil 2014: Figure 9.4)*

[47] *Several of Burgess' original statements regarding the form and nature of the Kilellan Farm assemblage were updated and modified by Cowie (2005).*

sites, this includes material from caves, ditches and material incorporated into older sites (1984: 76). The nature of these deposits and their relationship to the wider domestic situation is unclear (*cf.* Law, R. 2008: 11-13). During excavation of the Bronze Age settlement and later Iron Age wheelhouse at Cill Donnain, South Uist, a small assemblage of Cordoned Urns was recovered (Cumberpatch 2014) (Fig. 2.39). This assemblage was mostly plain, with examples of plain applied cordons on several sherds, contrasting with the use of incised and impressed modes of decoration at the nearby site of Cladh Hallan, South Uist (*ibid*.).

2.6 Summary: Pots and regionality

This chapter has highlighted some of the diverse changes in monuments, funerary practices and settlement during the period under study. These intersect with wider changes in material culture, including the emergence and use of a wide array of ceramic types (Table 2.8). These, whilst exhibiting points of similarity differ in many ways. These include differences in vessel manufacture and use. This is influenced by the expansion and contraction of intra and supra-regional networks during the period, and the movement of people, ideas and artefacts (Needham 2012: Figure 1:3). The initial introduction of low-carinated Beakers has often been linked to European migrants. Recent isotopic studies suggest that several individuals from burials could have been of Continental origin. This is further supported by new genetic studies, which suggests movement from the Lower Rhine region (Olalde *et al.* 2016; Parker Pearson *et al.* 2016). This movement appears to involve a small group of individuals and an extended period of acculturation and integration (Olalde *et al.* 2016: 7; Parker Pearson *et al.* 2016). The motivations for these movements are likely varied and multiple. Perhaps more interestingly are questions behind why Beakers were adopted or not by groups during the period. As will be argued in later sections of this thesis in certain areas there may not be a direct link between early and later Beakers, instead a degree of disparity could occur between the two. Importantly, these migratory groups do not represent a single monolithic entity but likely encompass several distinct groups. This in part reinforced by differences in form, decoration and manufacture of early Beakers (Needham 2005: 186). Early Beakers from funerary contexts could have been drawn from a wider repertoire of AOC decorated vessels, encompassing a range of sizes, including large sub-rim cordoned vessels. At present, the precise temporal relationship between these varied types is unclear, and further dating is clearly needed (Sheridan 2012b: 45).

From 2300 BC onwards, there is a notable diversification in funerary practices, with a range of Beakers in use (Fig. 2.5, Table 2.3). Forms include short-necked and s-profile Beakers,

which occur widely across Scotland. These are employed alongside a range of regional forms, which share aspects of form and decoration, as seen among domestic assemblages. This includes potential influence from Grooved Ware, the form of which is echoed in later bucket/ tub vessels grouped under the label of 'flat rim ware'. As with earlier Grooved Ware, Beakers are deployed in regional contingent ways, but draw on wider ideas and networks. There is, as will be examined, a potential disparity between early and later Beaker types (*contra.* Case 2001: 363; see Brodie 1998: 48). Instead of one single evolutionary tangent, instead it can be argued that in certain areas the emergence of Beakers is linked to later pan-British networks. From 2200 BC, Food Vessels are found across Scotland and other parts of Britain (Figs. 2.8, 2.9 & 2.10) (Table 2.4). These are outwardly categorised in similar ways to Beakers and share aspects of decoration in common. Despite the sense of definiteness created by current labels, each of the types discussed here can be fluid, encompassing a range of different attributes, which vary from region to region. This is underscored by the presence of Food Vessel and Beaker elements among the assemblages in the Hebrides (Figs. 2.35, 2.36 & 2.37), as well as the distinct nature of Beaker and Food Vessel pottery in Ireland. Contrasts between regions occur as well in the range of associations and patterns of deposition, in the case of Ireland and the Hebrides, Beakers are rarely associated with funerary contexts.

Beakers are frequently deployed alongside a host of other grave goods. Burials can be highly formalised with distinctions in sex and associated grave goods. Patterning is highly regional, and subject to a plethora of factors, rather than single models of status or gender (*cf.* **Chapter 3**). These burials exist alongside unaccompanied burials, the relationship of which to accompanied burials needs further consideration. The emergence of other novel artefact types, including the various varieties of Food Vessels indicates another series of important changes. Whilst these have typically been characterised as insular (*i.e.* Needham 2005), they can be linked to networks of exchange with the North of England and Ireland (Wilkin 2011a: 86; Vander Linden & Wilkin 2015). These include important networks involving the exchange of metal from Ross Island and several other sites (*ibid.*). Changes in burial practices continue to be documented across the later 3rd millennium, culminating in the predominance of cremation burials and urned cremation toward the end of the period under study. The role of pots in burials shifts from accompaniment to container, this change itself is related to wider developments in cosmology and attitudes to the dead.

In contrast, the nature of domestic activity is poorly understood. This is in part due to the nature of the evidence. Defining domestic activity is often challenging, and material from these sites tends to be poorly stratified due to post depositional processes. Despite this, it is clear

	Pottery	Other trends
2450-2300	Use of low-carinated/ s-profile Beakers in burials Possible use in domestic contexts Continued use of Grooved Ware in some regions	New funerary rites – single inhumation with grave goods Exotica- limited circulation Contacts across Irish Sea and Continent visible Distinct regional groups employing Beakers (differences in associations and vessel types)
2300-2100	Range of Beakers in use – strong regional diversity Beakers deployed in domestic contexts. Domestic pottery blend of types, incl. bucket/ tub vessels which could be related to Grooved Ware forms Food Vessels – exhibit inter and extra regional connections	Single burial, widening array of grave goods employed, incl. new ceramic types Changes in networks – focus on inter-regional contacts Contacts with Ireland continue – links in pottery and metal
2100-1800	Late Beakers – often poorly defined examples lacking distinct profiles or decoration Food Vessels – emergence of large Food Vessel Urns alongside Encrusted, Collared and Cordoned types Bucket/ tub vessels also employed in funerary practices, alongside continued domestic use	Changes in burial with cremation employed Changes in wider networks and artefact types associated with burials

Table 2.8: *Summary of key trends in the late 3rd millennium*

that a range of pottery types are in use. These overlap in part with those deposited in funerary contexts, but exhibit marked points of divergence (Gibson, A. 1984: 87). Current typologies are for the most part defined based on funerary vessels, and there use in domestic analyses needs to be carefully considered (Sheridan 2011c: 605). Variation in domestic assemblages can in part be explained by the contexts in which vessels were deployed. Current approaches tend to study the two contexts in isolation, creating an imbalance in our understanding of ceramic development and the relationship of funerary to everyday wares. At present, the description of domestic material is compounded by terminological confusion. Current definitions can vary from broad to narrow, with a suite of 'fuzzy' types on the side. Whilst labels are important, in the absence of clear regional understanding the imposition of labels is fraught with problems, as recently noted by Gibson in his review of Grooved Ware from the Milfield Basin (2002b) and in Cowie's discussion of the pottery from Kilellan Farm (2005: 77) (Fig. 2.37).

In summary, whilst there are noticeable trends across the whole of Britain and Ireland, the definition and understanding of these at a regional level needs further examination. There is a clear need to understand the interaction of different ceramic assemblages and the underlying motivations behind vessel selection and manufacture. This includes further analysis of contexts and interrelationships at a regional level. As will be examined in the next chapter, the changes that occur in the later 3rd millennium have often been examined from a macro-scale perspective, focussing on broad themes at the expense of nuanced regional studies, which consider the emergence of regional types and practices. In the next chapter I will examine these interpretations further, outlining in response an alternative framework through which to approach regionalism during the later 3rd millennium.

CHAPTER THREE
INTERPRETIVE THEMES & APPROACHES

3.1 Introduction

Having in the preceding chapter outlined key aspects of the later 3rd millennium BC, I will examine the differing ways the period in Britain has been interpreted. As space does not permit a full critique of the long history of later 3rd millennium studies (*cf.* Vander Linden 2013; Roberts, B. 2013), this review will focus on two key themes. Firstly, the range of approaches adopted to the interpretation and classification of pottery and material culture from the late 20th century to the present day. This examination is restricted to the four principal traditions outlined in **Chapter 1**, Beakers, Food Vessels, Collared and Cordoned Urns (Fig. 1.1). The second interconnected theme considers approaches to interpretations of change, including notions of mobility and prestige goods. Following this, I will outline the interpretive position adopted in this thesis, drawing on elements of previous theories alongside recent discussions of relational approaches. The impact of this on the classificatory approach adopted in the thesis is discussed in **Chapter 4**.

3.2 Interpreting the later 3rd millennium BC

3.2.1 Culture-history, people and types

Early studies of the 3rd millennium BC were predominantly focused on questions of chronology and typology (Jones, S. 1997: 15). The importance of typology as an ordering device had been well recognised since the 19th century, with the development of the Three Age system[1] (Trigger 2006: 224-32), and the classification of various pottery types (Abercromby 1902, 1904, 1907, 1912; Thurnam 1871; Bateman 1861). Different artefact types were frequently associated with ethnicity, a view that underpinned culture-historical methodologies (Jones, A. 2002: 105; Trigger 2006: 237; Jones, S. 1997: 15). Although having its initial roots in the work of Kossina (1911; van der Waals 1984: 1), culture-history was further developed

[1] *The Three Age system by Thomsen divided Prehistory into three successive ages of, stone, bronze and iron.*

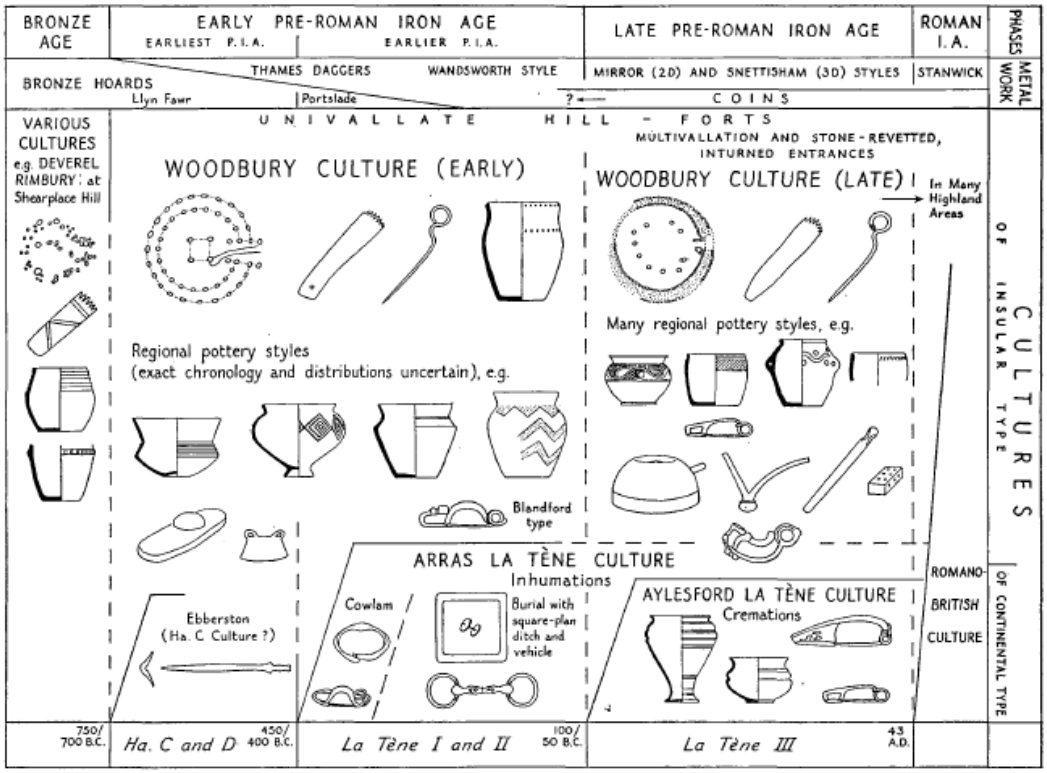


Figure 3.1: *Examples of Iron Age Culture Groupings (Hodson 1964: 108)*

in Britain by Childe in the 1920s (*cf.* Roberts, B. & Vander Linden 2011). Childe defined cultures as "*certain types of remains – pots, implements, ornaments, burial sites, house forms, constantly recurring together*" (1929: v–vi) (Fig. 3.1)[2]. These recurrent elements represented socially successful inventions that had become 'types' by being accepted by members of the group as a norm of behaviour (Hodder 1982: 3). Through the identification of these types, recurrent groups could be defined, and their distribution and movement mapped (McNairn 1980: 49; Trigger 2006: 243; Jones, S. & Richards, C. 2000: 104). Cultures were typically viewed as static normative entities, with change occurring though external agency (Roberts, B. & Vander Linden 2011; Sørenson 2015: 86; Johnson, M.H. 2010: 18; Jones, A. 1997: 29; see also Anthony 1990). The appearance of Beakers and associated material culture was interpreted as the result of several invasions or migrations (*e.g.* Abercromby 1912; Clark 1931; Clarke, D.L. 1970). The association of brachycephalic skulls with Beakers, in contrast to

[2] *While this is the most oft quoted definition of culture by Childe, he produced several varying interpretations which reflected his continuously developing thinking on the subject (cf. McNairn 1980). By the late 1950s Childe had moved towards a polythetic model of culture. For a fuller review of culture-history cf. Jones, S. 1997; van der Waals 1984 and Roberts, B. & Vander Linden 2011*

dolichocephalic skulls, which were associated with Neolithic ceramics[3], was cited as further proof of migration (Abercromby 1902: 374, 1912: 9; *cf.* Brodie 1994 for a fuller review)[4]. In contrast to Beakers, Food Vessels were varyingly interpreted as local or foreign. Abercromby suggested that Food Vessels were associated with a different stock of people endowed with a "*more lively fancy*" then the 'Beaker folk' (1912: 116). Childe also suggested a foreign influence for Food Vessels (1935: 94-95) highlighting connections to Ireland (1946: 51; see Ashbee 1960: 138). Other scholars suggested a local development from Neolithic wares (Smith, R.A 1910), or a mix of local and external influence (Kitson-Clark 1937) (**Section 2.3**).

During this early phase, several typologies were developed for Beakers, Food Vessels and to a lesser extent Collared Urns (Figs. 3.2, 3.3 & 3.4). Abercromby produced a series of definitions of Beakers, Food Vessels and 'cinerary urns', including Collared Urns (Figs. 3.3 & 3.4) (1904, 1907, 1912). These built on earlier classifications by Thurnam (1871) and Bateman (1861)[5] (Figs. 3.2 & 3.3). In the case of Beakers, Abercromby retained the earlier sub-divisions of Thurnam, relabelling the groups as A, B and C (Fig. 3.2). Abercromby's three Beaker types and their subdivisions provided the main system of classification throughout the early 20th century seeing several modifications (Clark 1931; Crichton-Mitchell 1934[6]; Childe 1935: Chp. V, 1940) (Fig. 3.2).

Abercromby divided Food Vessels south of the River Tweed into six groups (1912: 93-4). This was followed with the development of similar schemes for Scotland and Ireland. Childe in the 1930s and 40s outlined an additive scheme, which sought to create a flexible typology that could articulate the wide diversity found within Food Vessels (1935, 1946) (Fig. 3.3). Within this scheme Childe acknowledge the inherently regional nature of Food Vessel pottery (1935, 1946). Other studies of Food Vessels included discussions of regional varieties such as Yorkshire Vases (Kitson-Clark 1937) and modifications to Abercromby's original scheme

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[3] Brachycephalic skulls have a relatively broad, short skull, with a breadth at least 80% of the length. In contrast, dolichocephalic skulls have a rounder appearance with a breadth less than 80% of the length (see Brodie 1994 for a review of the concept and its application and Parker Pearson et al. 2016 for a recent review employing isotope data)

[4] The association of skull morphology and artefact types took a somewhat fantastical turn in the late 1960s, with Lethbridge speculating that the 'Beaker people' came from Mars (1969: 117).

[5] These in themselves built on initial observations by Hoare who defined a series of 'drinking cups' during his excavations in Wiltshire (1821: 25). The drinking cups represented the second of the three classes of pottery defined by Hoare, the other two being cinerary urns and incense cups (ibid.). Thurnam's work included discussion of other vessel types including Encrusted Urns commonly recorded from Ireland (Brindley 2007; Waddell 1975; Kavanagh 1973). For Scottish versions see Sheridan 2007a

[6] In her study of Scottish Beakers Crichton-Mitchell suggested that these have their own system of classification (1934: 134). This notion was repeated by Shepherd who produced a step-based scheme for NE Scotland in the 1980s following Lanting and Van der Waals step-based scheme in 1986).

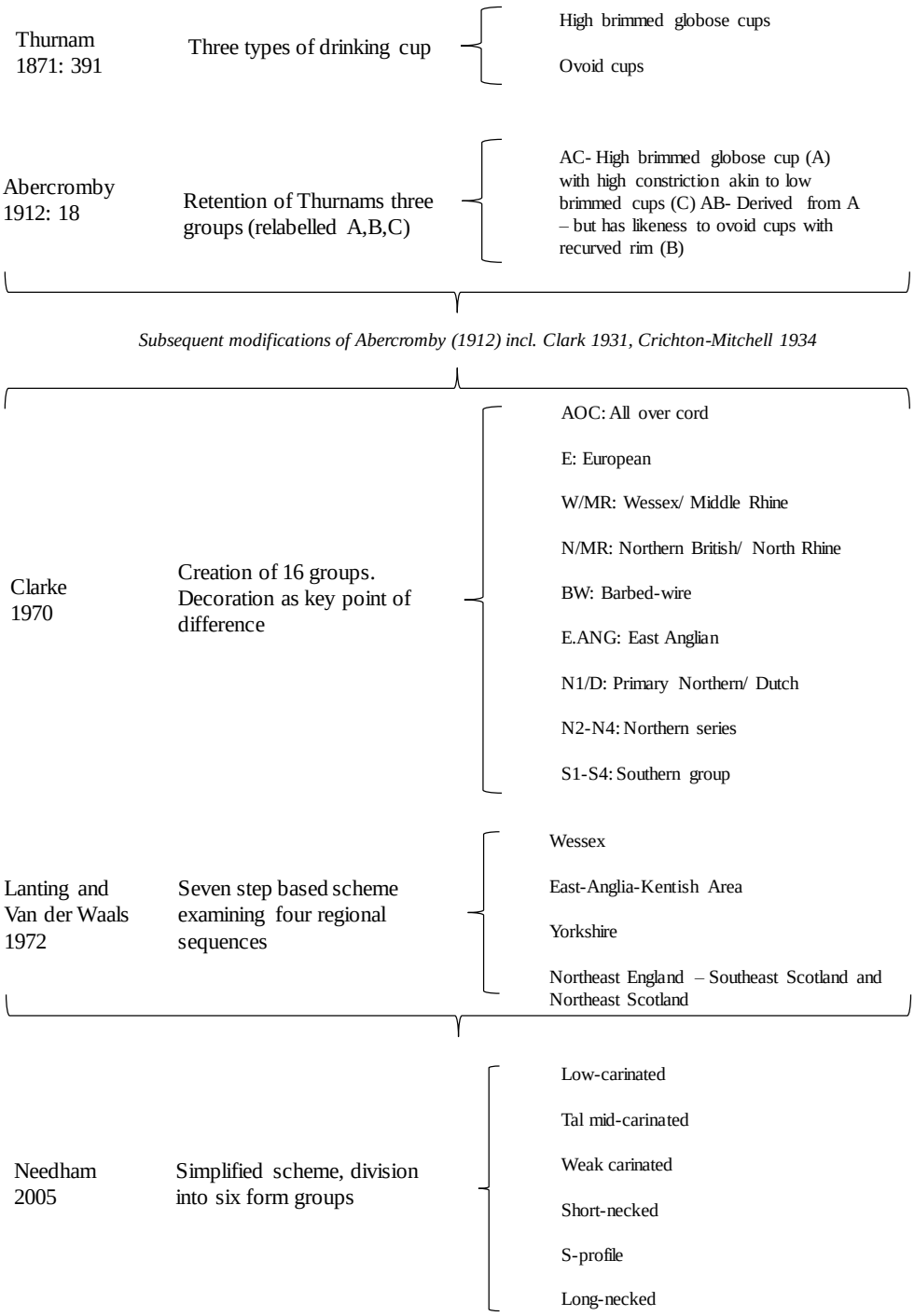


Figure 3.2: *Principal Beaker classifications 1871-2005*

(Manby 1957). In 1957, Manby proposed a rearrangement of Abercromby's types, inserting several new sub-groups and merging others (*ibid.*) (Fig. 3.3). In the late 1950s, ApSimon broke with preceding discussions, rejecting the finer subdivisions of Abercromby in favour of examining regional developments and patterns of association (1958) (Fig. 3.3).

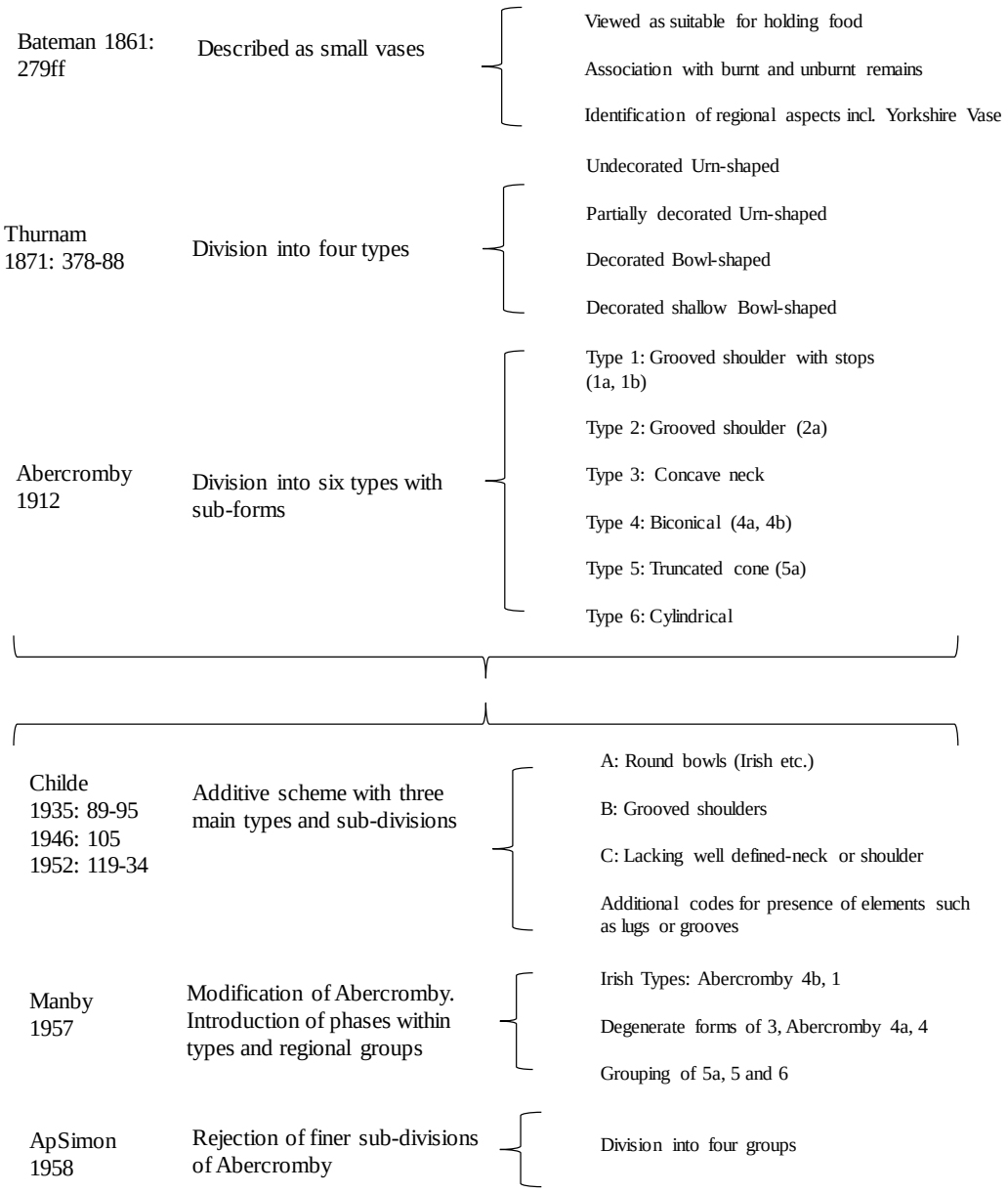


Figure 3.3: *Principal Food Vessel classifications 1861-1958*

In contrast to Beakers and Food Vessels, Collared Urns have seen less sustained study. Thurnam initially defined several varieties of 'urn', including Beaker and Food Vessel types (Figs. 3.2 & 3.3). In this scheme, Collared Urns were divided into two types: Overhanging Rims and Moulded Rims (Fig. 3.4). Abercromby united these two types, suggesting that Moulded Rim varieties represented early introductions by settlers from Gaul (1907)[7]. In his 1912 corpus, Abercromby modified this view, attributing Collared Urns to internal processes.

[7] *In his scheme Collared Urns, comprising Overhanging and Moulded rims were Type 1 in his series of seven cinerary urn types. Type 5 encompassed Cordoned urns, Type 6 Encrusted Urns and Type 7 Food Vessel Urns.*

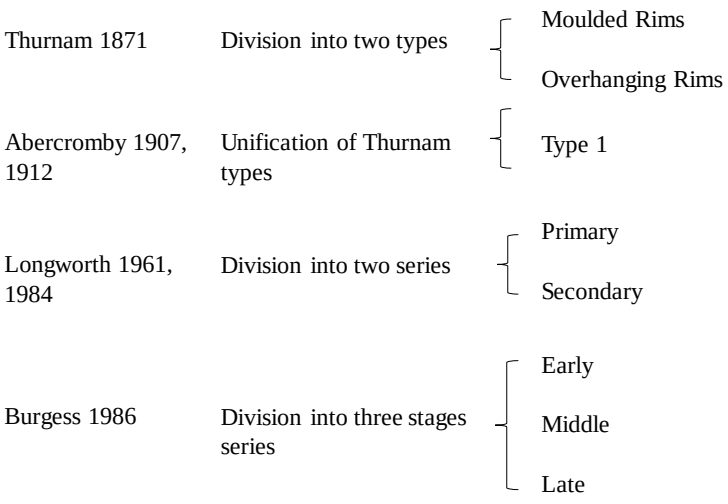


Figure 3.4: *Principal Collared Urn classifications 1871-1986*

Rather than deriving from Gaul, Abercromby instead suggested that Collared Urns had developed from Food Vessels (1912: 23). The indigenous development of Collared Urns was continued by Isobel Foster Smith who suggested a connection to Fengate Ware (1956: 165)[8]. Cordoned Urns, on the other hand, were viewed by early commentators as a development from Cordoned Urns (Abercromby 1912; May & Collins 1959; Kavanagh 1976: see also Waddell 1995 for an overview)[9].

In summary, culture-historical methodologies were grounded in prevailing evolutionary and functionalist views of the time, influenced by anthropological and sociological studies of human behaviour (Lucas 2012: 135; Trigger 2006: 314). These approaches highlighted change at spatial and temporal boundaries masking regional variability (Roberts, B. & Vander Linden 2011: 3). The impetus for change was positioned as an external factor, primarily taking the form of mobility (Johnson, M.H. 2010: 19). Changes in material culture were often interpreted as signalling the presence of or response to different groups. This consequently led to oppositional and bounded views of material culture, where pots or other materials could serve to map and define cultural units. Despite providing a crucial framework for understanding the period this bounded view as will be seen runs counter to the often dynamic and fluid roles undertaken by material culture. Despite these interpretive problems, the early phase of research

[8] *This connection had also been postulated by Piggott who saw similar relationships between Food Vessels and Peterborough Ware (1938: 90-1). Childe drew similar parallels in decorative motifs and modes of construction (1949: 146)*

[9] *Abercromby interpreted Cordoned Urns as the outcome of long term devolution from Collared Urns (1912: 57, 102; May & Collins 1959: Fig. 3).*

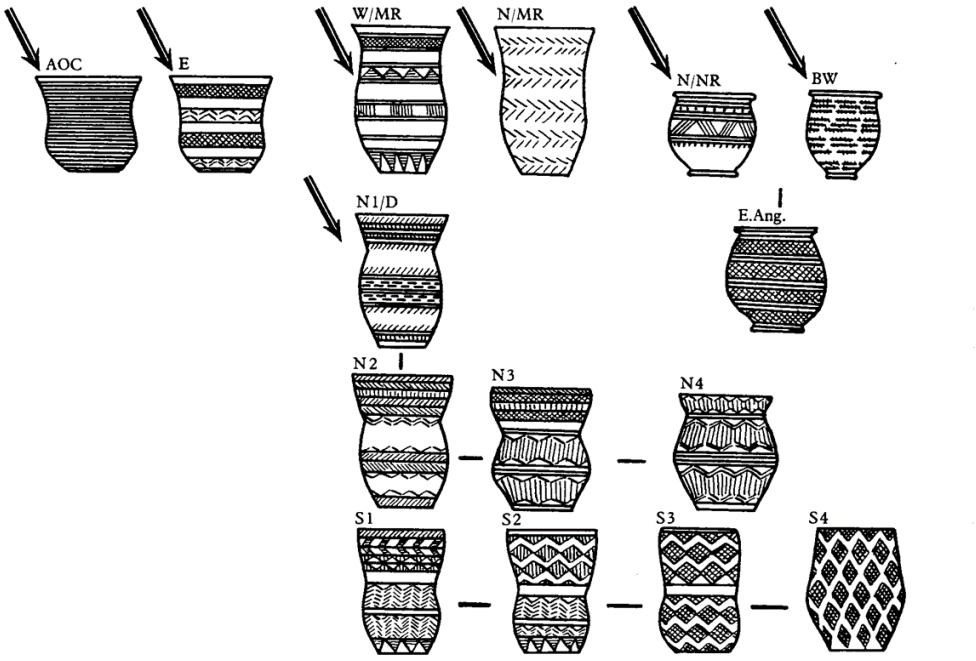


Figure 3.5: *Clarke's Beaker types, excluding southern handled series (1970: Fig VII)*

laid the foundation of principals that continued to inform studies into the 21st century, notably ideas typology and much of the nomenclature still used today.

3.2.2 Functionalism and Systems 1960-1980

In response to critiques of culture-history, alternative interpretive paradigms were developed during the 1960s and 1970s. These drew on evolutionist, behaviourist, ecological and positivist perspectives (Trigger 2006: 389; Binford 1962; Clarke, D.L. 1968). In his seminal *Analytical Archaeology* Clarke critiqued the undertheorized nature of archaeological work (1968: xv). In response, he set out the terrain for an analytical archaeology that viewed archaeological entities as polythetic rather than monothetic (1968: 35-7; Taylor, T. 2015: 96). In contrast to monothetic entities, these are composed of multiple attributes. Each attribute represents an "*irreducible character of two or more states, acting as an independent variable within an artefact system*" (Clarke, D.L. 1968: 156). In this scenario, no single attribute is sufficient or important to the group membership (*ibid.*: 37). Instead, artefacts possess a set of shared attributes. Based on these, artefact types could be divided into two groups; those that closely

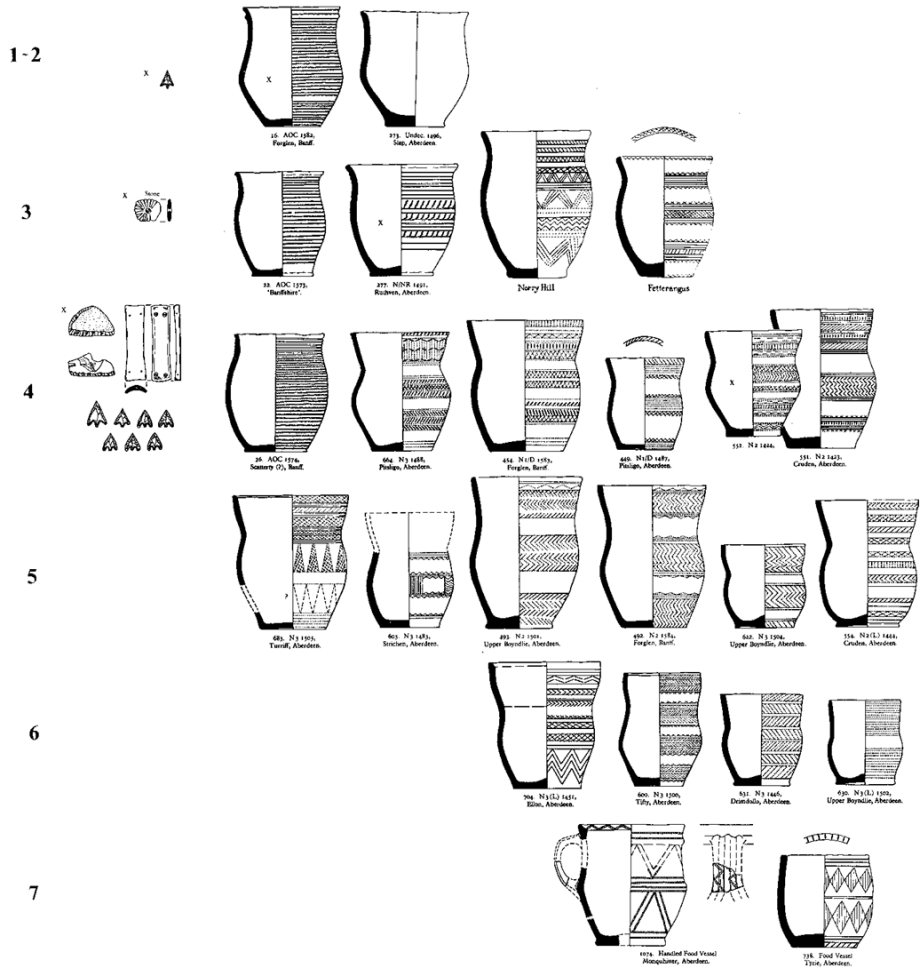


Figure 3.6: *Step based scheme for Beakers from Buchan (Shepherd, I. 1986: Illus. 19)*

resembled the core type (prototype), by sharing the bulk of attributes, and in turn less well defined peripheral members of the category[10].

Clarke employed this polythetic approach in his typology of Beaker pottery, dividing the pottery into 16 groups (Figs. 3.2 & 3.5). For Clarke decoration was the key element, providing a set of non-functional traits which owing to their non-functional nature could be used to map cultural groups (1970: 6, 9). Each group facilitated further division of Beakers, going beyond simple division of vessels by form, which had underpinned earlier typologies (Clarke, D.L. 1970: 35). This analysis briefly discussed examples of domestic material, which typically comprised less prototypical vessels (Clarke, D.L. 1974: 473-4) (**Section 2.5.2**). Despite the

[10] The concept of polythetic categories overlaps with the later notion of prototype theory outlined by Lakoff (1987), based on the work of Rosch (1978, 1988; Mervis & Rosch 1981). Prototype theory represents a mode of graded categorization where some members are more central than others (Rosch 1999: 65-9; Mervis & Rosch 1981: 95).

novelty of the classificatory approach, the significance of differences remained grounded in an invasionist model[11] (1970).

Lanting and Van der Waals (LDV) criticised Clarke's focus on decoration and functional view of vessel form (LDV 1972: 23). In response, LDV devised a step-based scheme (Fig. 3.6) highlighting processes of regional development in four areas:

- Wessex
- the East Anglian-Kentish area
- Yorkshire
- northeast England – southeast – northeast Scotland (1972: 35-41)

This scheme was developed further by Shepherd for northeast Scotland, which was not covered in depth by LDV (1986) (Fig. 3.6). Rather than multiple invasions, a single initial migration with subsequent regional development was proposed by LDV (1972: 35). In the 1970s, Case devised a simplified tripartite scheme, focused on devising regional groups, divided into early, middle and late types (1976; 1977). Case, like Clarke and LDV, examined wider associations in graves and, to a limited degree, domestic pottery (Case 1977; 1993: 243)[12] [13].

In contrast to the macro scale analysis of Beakers, Food Vessels continued to be examined at a regional level. Following on from the approach of ApSimon (1958), Simpson rejected the Southern English Food Vessel group, further restricting the definition of Food Vessels (1968) (Fig. 3.8). Megaw and Simpson proposed an even narrower definition, comprising only two regional groups: the Irish Bowl and the Yorkshire Vase (1981: 230) (Figs. 2.9 & 3.8). In Ireland, Waddell questioned the efficacy of the term 'Food Vessel', suggesting it be dropped in favour of the descriptive terms, 'bowls' and 'vases' (1976). Counter to the increasingly regional nature of Food Vessel studies, Burgess re-introduced a series of detailed subdivisions. These were based principally on form and decoration, highlighting the regional diversity of Food Vessels at a national level (1980a, 1980b: 184) (Fig. 2.6). Pierpoint in his review of prehistoric pottery from Yorkshire, aimed using computing modelling, to not give priority to

[11] The use of an 'outdated' explanatory model is in part explained by the fact that Clarke initially wrote his synthesis of Beaker pottery in 1964, with the volume not being published until 1970 (LDV 1972: 21), by which time Clarke had gone on to develop alternative explanatory models, including the idea of Beakers as prestige items being exchanged (cf. Clarke, D.L. 1976)
[12] Case further developed and expanded this system subsuming his early styles into five summary regional groups, which sought to include domestic material (see Case 1993)
[13]Both LDV and Case's schemes were influenced by recent developments in radiocarbon dating, which reduced the importance of typologies as chronological frameworks. See Vander Linden 2013: 73; Renfrew 1973a: Chp. 3 on the impact of radiocarbon dating on typology

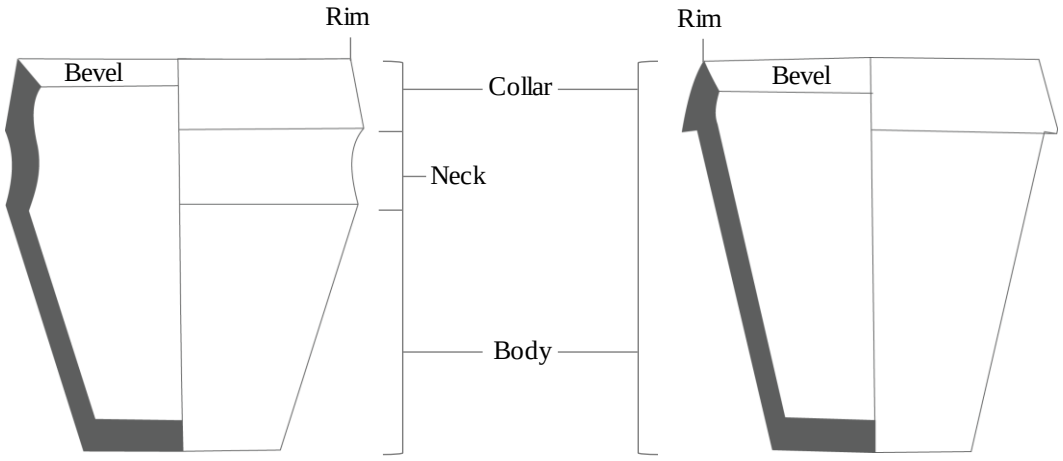


Figure 3.7: *Longworth's components of Collared Urn forms (after Longworth 1984: Figure 2)*

only one aspect (1980: 63). Instead Pierpoint sought to relate stylistic features of Food Vessels to aspects of funerary practice and group identity (*ibid.* 198-254). As highlighted by Wilkin Pierpoint's approach had an 'atomizing' effect, with Food Vessels no longer emerging as coherent entities through production (Wilkin 2013: 86). Additionally, the statistically driven nature of the approach has made it difficult to apply these analyses to other regions (*ibid.*).

In 1961 Longworth produced a type series for Collared Urns (1961, 1984), subsequently modified by Burgess (1986) (Fig. 3.4). In his original series, Longworth proposed a Primary and Secondary, based on the presence or absence of a series of attributes, echoing the polythetic approach developed by Clarke[14] (Fig. 3.4). Longworth saw Collared Urns as being composed of five key elements, including the collar, rim and body (Fig. 3.7). The Primary series contained those which were seen to represent an early phase, encompassing a range of 'ancestral traits' that could be traced back to Peterborough Ware. In contrast, the Secondary series represented 'internal growth' and lacked the majority of the earlier 'ancestral traits' (1984: 29). Through this mapping of attributes, Longworth sought to examine the origins and development of Collared Urns (1984: 3). Alongside reiterating the apparent relationship between Primary Series, Collared Urns and the Peterborough Ware tradition, relations were traced to Grooved Ware, Beakers and Food Vessels, highlighting the wide number of traits shared by each group. In the case of Food Vessels, Longworth suggested that each tradition represented independent social groups (1984: 24). This interpretation rested on the earlier

[14] *Longworth defined a pottery tradition as a 'complex of separate usages which recurrently occur together' (1984: 3). Individual vessels, like Clarke's polythetic approach were viewed as 'an amalgamation of separate, distinct but complementary components which, taken together, make up the whole' (1984: 3).*

Culture Historic view of artefact types equating to social groups. In this light different pottery traditions were a "*direct reflection of a particular group's taste*" (Longworth 1984: 3)

Whilst typology and classification continued to play a key role in the ordering of material, there was a shift away from notions of homeland and mobility as explanatory concepts (Vander Linden 2013: 73). This was stimulated by the growing recognition that associations between culture, artefact and ethnicity were more complex (Trigger 2006; Jones, S. 1997: 107). Descriptions of culture were increasingly replaced by studies of the definition of society and the way artefacts reflected on new social orders (Jones, A. 2007: 74; Vander Linden 2013: 73). Material culture was repositioned as the product of cultural processes rather than reflecting cultural norms (Jones, A. 2007: 74). Cultural processes included ideas of fashion and prestige as drivers of change (Clarke, D.L. 1976; Shennan 1986). It was in this context that Shennan argued that Beakers and their associated materials equated to a restricted package of distinct artefacts and practices (Burgess & Shennan 1976; Shennan 1986; Whittle 1981). This package was compared with the specialised accoutrements and practices of the Peyote cult of North America (Burgess & Shennan 1976: 312)[15]. Drawing on this analogy, Beakers were suggested to have been associated with a set of practices, including the consumption of alcoholic

Simpson 1968	Focus on associations and chronology of Food Vessels.	Retention of Yorkshire Vase, Irish Vase and Bowl.
Megaw & Simpson 1979	Definition of only two major regional groups	Yorkshire vase food vessel Irish bowl food vessel
Burgess 1980	Re-introduction of sub-divisions	Vases Bipartite Ridged, bucket-shaped vases Rounded vases, bowls and buckets Irish-Scottish Bowls

Figure 3.8: *Principal Food Vessel classifications 1958-1980*

[15] *Central to the Peyote cult is the eating of the hallucinatory Peyote cactus. The ceremony involves the use of standardised accoutrements, including rattles, a carved staff, feather fan a small drum and a crescentic altar of clay or earth (ibid., see La Barre 1938).*

substances, echoing the original interpretation of Beakers as drinking vessels (1976: 326). Consequently, based on this analogy the distribution of Beakers and its associated paraphernalia was explained by the diffusion of ideas and fashion among competitive elites (*ibid.*; Brück & Fontijn 2013; Harrison 1980: 165; Vander Linden 2013: 73).

While these developments moved the study of pottery from a representational role as cultural proxies, they were still grounded in a normative view of the past. Within these approaches individuals were lost in sets of normative rules or systems (Johnson, M.H. 2010: 105; Barrett 1994: 1). Individuals were frequently portrayed as bounded, the presence of grave goods providing indications of status and identity (Fowler 2004a: 75). Cremation burials or those without visible grave goods were viewed as of low standing (Rowlands 1980: 51; Brück 2004a, 2006)[16]. Beakers continued to provide the primary focus of research with a series of important publications, including Clarke's corpus (1970) (Fig. 3.2). This was coupled with new explanatory models for the dissemination of Beakers and associated practices, seeking to move beyond invasionist models. Artefacts, defined as clusters of attributes, instead were positioned as parts of systems where competition between groups provided a key means of dissemination. In part, the continued focus on patterns of association and packages side-lined Food Vessels, which had few other artefactual associations or links to the Continent. These vessels were often situated as the "*rump of indigenous society*" (Needham 2007: 44)[17], being adopted by groups which sought to maintain a "*degree of cultural autonomy*" (Needham 2012: 5). Such a view misrepresents and underplays the vital role of Food Vessels and their position in wider networks as outlined in **Section 2.3** (*cf.* Wilkin 2013:18). This includes the role and position of Food Vessels in emergent networks of the later 3rd millennium, including the development of bronze alloying.

3.2.3 Challenging types. Post-processualism and typology

In the 1980s, growing concerns over positivist approaches and the need to address cognitive factors saw further critique of culture-historic and systems orientated modes of analysis (Johnson, M.H. 2010: 102; Shanks & Tilley 1992: 11; Hodder 2004: 26; Fahlander 2012: 110). This included growing criticism of Processualist views of culture and its position as a subset of wider systems. Instead studies increasingly sought to examine the way culture was

[16] This low status view of poorly furnished grave goods has been reinforced through typological approaches, where diagnostic grave goods played a key role in determining aspects of dating and consequently identity.

[17] Burgess made a similar set of observations remarking that the users of Food Vessels occupied "some undefined, lower niche in the Beaker social order" (1980b: 176)

constituted and its active role in the transformation of social organisation (Shanks & Tilley 1992: 13, 112). Rather than having purely functional and technological roles, objects were repositioned as having cultural and social meaning (Olsen 2010: 25; Sørensen 2015: 88). Hodder, a leading proponent of the post-positivist approach, developed a range of semiotic and contextual methods, drawing in part on Derrida's notion of deferred meaning (*différence*) (Hodder 1982; Jones, A. 2007: 79; Preucel & Bauer 2001: 86; Bintliff 2011:14). The concept of deferred meaning suggests that words and signs can never fully summon forth what they mean but can only be defined through appeal to additional words (Derrida 1982: 5). Following Derrida, Hodder suggested that the archaeological record could be read like a text (*e.g.* 1982: 218-28). The interpretation of material culture required reading between the lines to understand the various roles fulfilled by objects in the social environment (Johnson, M.H. 2010: 109; Barrett 1987: 470). To achieve this, Hodder advocated the establishment of a contextual method, working from text to symbolic meaning content (1991: 128). Hodder defined the approach as, "*the study of contextual data, using contextual methods of analysis, in order to arrive at two types of contextual meaning*" consisting of "*the environmental, technological and behavioural context of action*" and "*with-text*" (Hodder 1986: 153-4). In this scenario, artefacts exist in a dialectical relationship, as outlined by Marxist models of the process of historical change (Chilton 1999: 1; Johnson, M.H. 2010: 97). This dialectical relationship in part emerges and is expressed through processes of categorisation.

Categories as viewed by Miller provide a key link between objects and the social, and ultimately to the social order (1985: Chp 1, 201-202). This notion was echoed by Barrett, who argued that material culture was not a record of past events but evidence for social practices (1988: 6). Material culture was embedded in the creation and sustaining of these social systems (Dobres 2000: 127; Shanks & Tilley 1987: 85). In this scenario, artefacts operate in frameworks of meaning, rather than as direct signifiers (Hodder 1991: 14; Graves 1987: 194)[18]. Importantly, within these schema categorisation is frequently not by common properties as in conventional typology or by function (Miller 2010: 45, 47; Lakoff 1987; see also Rosch 1999). Instead, categories emerge from wider sets of relations, rather than existing as self-evident types. Ceramics themselves may be categorized by attributes that depend on their relation to place and time (Pluciennik 1997). Miller demonstrated in his examination of Indian pottery how vessels were categorised by their place in relation to other pots and people (1985: 50). This included the impact of the caste system on pottery manufacture and subsequent use

[18] *This follows Derrida's critique of signification and critique of meaning, where meaning is deferred along chains of signification (Jones, A 2007:79).*

Group	Distribution	Key Features
A	Ireland	Range of Beaker types recorded from Ireland
B	Ba – examples in north and south of Britain Bb – multiple origins in N. Britain extending across whole of island Bc – Common in southern Britain	• Beakers incl. Clarke's (1970) N & S types (Fig. 3.5). Subdivided into Ba, Bb and Bc • Ba – Prevalent comb-impressed decoration. Some elements derived from Grooved Ware • Bb – Inturned necks and rims – as with Ba some elements could derive from Grooved Ware. Comb impressions, incision and dense fingernail impressions. Wide range of associations incl. flint daggers and stone battle axes • Bc – Linear motifs rare, motifs typically floating. Rare associations in comparison to Bb
C	Northern and coastal	• Beakers incl. Clarke's (1970) AOC type (Fig. 3.5). Decoratively vessels are similar to D, with comb and cord impressions common • Sparse associations
D	Concentrated mainly in Wessex and Upper Thames	• Close parallels to Atlantic European style (incl. Clarke's (1970) types AOC, E, W/MR (Fig. 3.5). Viewed by Case as group from which those of other insular groups are developments or variations • Recurrent association with tanged copper knives, wristgaurd and barbed and tanged arrowheads
E	Concentrated in the south-east	• Some overlap in terms of decoration with D, but motifs tend to be more austere • Barbed wire motifs and globular forms are common • Associations are sparse but incl. metal and shale disc beads,

Table 3.1: *Case principal regional Beaker groups (after Case 2001)*

(**Section 3.3.1**). Boast employed several of these ideas in his critiques of Beakers (1995, 1998, 2002). In these, he highlighted the reified nature of the Beaker idea and the need to not only view the object in its finished state, but to consider the production process (1995: 70). Following Lakoff's discussion of categories, Boast emphasised that the meaning of the object arises from its "*use in association with certain social activities*" (*ibid.*: 71). In addition, he noted that typological distinctions could denote "*categorical demarcations*" rather than changes over time (*ibid.*). In this scenario, meaning is not fixed but, instead, dependent on a wide variety of actors, including context (*ibid.*). As shown by work on Beakers from northeast Scotland, distinctions in Beaker form can in part be related to notions of gender. In Yorkshire Pierpoint demonstrated that high quality tall Beakers were primarily associated with males,

'Phase'	**Date**	**Key features**
Beakers as circumscribed, exclusive culture	2500-2250 cal BC	Beakers and associated funerary practices are European in outlook Scattered interstitial distribution. Graves are infrequent. Some associations between early Beakers and existing monuments
Beakers as instituted culture	*c.*2250-1950 cal BC	Beaker cultural values overcome local pre-existing values Burials more frequent - reflect society in general rather than a limited group Diversification in Beaker forms Bronze alloying
Beakers as past reference	*c.* 1950-1700/1600 cal BC	Graves are poor with few associated artefacts. Range of late Beaker styles which reference previous forms. Food Vessels and other types in use

Table 3.2: *Needham's chronological framework for Beaker use (see also Table 2.1)*

while those buried with children were typically small and poorly made (1980: 59). Clarke recognised similar distinctions within patterns of grave goods, where females were associated with bronze awls. Males were predominantly associated with weapons alongside mundane items including strike-a-lights (1970: 265, 448; see also Woodward & Hunter, J. 2016: Chp. 11)[19]. Concepts of gender and its impact on pottery manufacture and use are further discussed in **Section 3.3**.

Clarke's typology alongside LDV's step-based system continued to provide the primary means of classification from the 1970s onwards. Case made modifications to several of his earlier groupings, creating five regional groups based on patterns of association and regional variation (*e.g.* 1993, 2001, 2004a, 2004b) (Table 3.1). Employing a greatly increased set of radiocarbon dates, Needham in the early 2000s undertook a review of Beaker types (2005). Each of Needham's types presented a series of 'lineages' (2005: 182), which like Clarke's polythetic categories share attributes in common. This could include recurrent patterns of association in funerary contexts. Like Case, Needham's contextual approach provided a more flexible

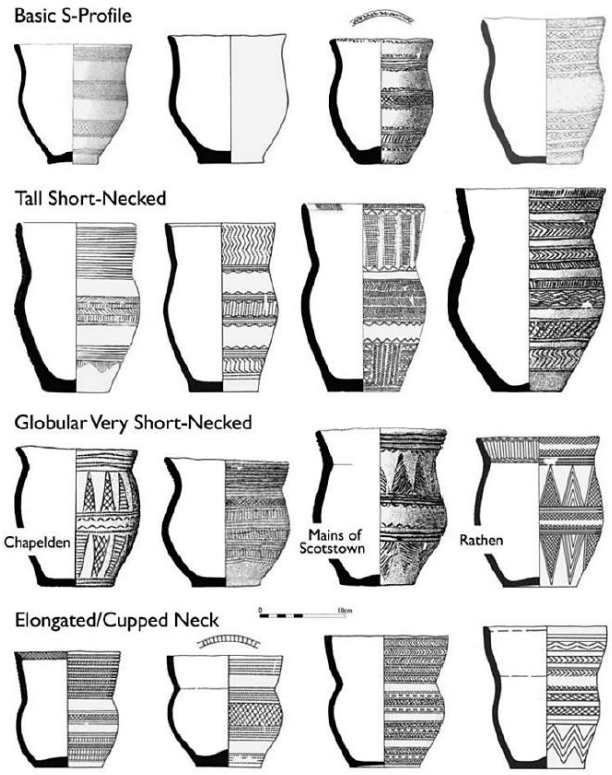


Figure 3.9: *Additional Beaker types for northeast Scotland, based on morphology and contextual associations (Curtis & Wilkin 2016)*

[19] *As noted by Brodie some of these sex assignments were made based on grave goods, introducing a potential degree of circularity into the argument (2002: 300)*

framework for regional studies. This simplified Beaker scheme presented a clear three-stage chronology for the period (2005: 209) (Table 3.2). Elements of this scheme though can be critiqued for relying on an oppositional view where Beakers "*overcome*" local elements, which masks the potentially wide array of responses to Beaker pottery and its users. This oppositional view as noted extends to Food Vessels, which are frequently portrayed as local against foreign Beakers and associated ideas.

The types and dates established by Needham have since formed the cornerstone of most Beaker studies and have been supplemented by recent regional analyses. In Scotland, several modifications to Needham's groups have been proposed (*e.g.* Wilkin 2011b; Curtis & Wilkin 2012; Curtis & Wilkin *forthcoming*; Fowler & Wilkin 2016). These primarily include further sub-division of s-profile and short-necked Beakers, based on morphology and associations (*e.g.* age, sex and additional grave goods) (Fig. 3.9). Alongside this work on Beakers, reviews of other ceramic types of the late 3rd millennium have been produced. These include recent work by Law on Collared Urns (2008), ongoing work into accessory vessels (Hallam 2015; C. Copper pers. comm.), and work on Food Vessels by Wilkin (2013). Food Vessels have benefited from dating programmes including Brindley's dating of Irish vessels (2007). Along with several other studies (*e.g.* Fowler 2013a), these have combined elements of contextual methodologies coupled with relational approaches, which will be further examined in the next section.

Despite the 1980s showing an important shift towards active approaches to material culture, a hermeneutic distinction continued to be maintained between humans and things, with the human actor as an interpreting subject existing in a world of representations. In this setting, the world only had significance through meaningful symbols, with agency positioned as a human factor (Jones, A. & Alberti 2013: 22). This anthropocentric view was challenged by phenomenological and materialist perspectives of the 1990s, which began to consider the active engagements between people and the material world.

3.3 Relational ontologies

In the preceding section I highlighted past approaches to interpreting the nature of society and the role of material culture in the later 3rd millennium. In each model, material culture took on representational roles, acting alternately as a signifier or proxy. How this was achieved varied according to the interpretive paradigm of the time: In culture-history as a marker of identity, in Processualism as a key to understanding society, and in post-processualism as a text or

symbolic field. The phenomenological turn of the 1990s saw a growing interest in the experienced world and ideas of materiality (*cf.* Brück 2005). Notions of materiality and phenomenology repositioned the material world as an active element, which could operate with a degree of agency (Johnson, M.H. 2010: 224). Agency, however, continued to be positioned as a human quality, with things and places being interpreted by human agents (see papers in Knappett & Malafouris 2008 for further discussion of this issue). Alongside this recurrent anthropocentric view of the world, there has been a distinct sense of *déjà vu* in interpretations of the later 3rd millennium (*cf.* Vander Linden 2013). This includes a recurrent focus on a select number of themes and questions, including the 'Beaker problem', alongside mapping and exploring networks of exchange. Consequently, there is an inherent tension between understanding the period as one of large scale processes versus the expression of these at a local level (*e.g.* Vander Linden 2004, 2013; Clarke, D.L. 1976; Clarke, D.V. 2004; Martin 2011). Past approaches have tended to focus on generating mono-causal explanations, often focused on questions of origins and the transmission of new cultural forms. In these, change is attributed to a single factor – such as mobility, the emergence of elites or competition and differentiation amongst social groups. This has in part been influenced by the nature of the questions being asked, which frequently have focussed on the role of a select few items, pursuing representational analyses at the expense of wider regional studies or inter-artefactual relationships. Because Beakers and other types of pottery are posited as bounded and well-defined categories, this reinforces the repetition of certain questions. These categories are often regarded as pre-existing rather than emergent. As highlighted by Jones, the construction of artefact categories creates *"its own imperatives and consequences"* (2012: 189). In this regard, studies of Beakers and wider changes of the period can take on a sense of familiarity, with data often reinforcing expectations (Vander Linden 2013: 78).

This comes at the expense of understanding the poly-causal nature of the period, where all the above factors were likely at play, with varied regional effects as seen in **Chapter 2**. This includes considering the process by which categories of pottery emerge. Instead, as contended by other scholars (*i.e.* Case 1993; Clarke, D.L. 1974: 460; Damm 2012: 45), what is needed is a suite of approaches that examine alternative narratives and reflexive views of typology, aiming to understand the poly-causal nature of change. While contextual approaches examined the active role of material culture, there remained a divide between subject and object, with objects continuing to play representational roles. This conceptual divide as argued by various scholars poses the primary challenge in developing reflexive views of the past, which examine the "*various social dynamics that artefacts are a part of*" (Damm 2012: 46).

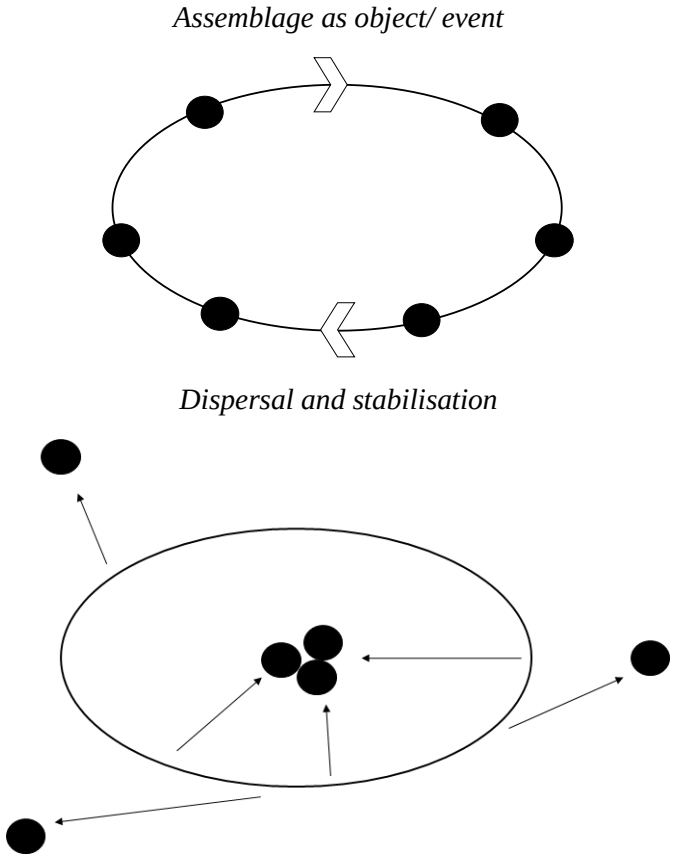


Figure 3.10: *Diagrammatic representation of how assemblages stabilize and disperse (after Lucas 2012: fig 15)*

Non-representational, relational approaches provide alternative ways of conceptualising the relationship between humans and things, as well as developing a critical awareness of the nature of data and interpretation (Alberti & Jones, A. 2013; DeLanda 2016: 2; Jones, A. & Sibesson 2013: 154-157). In contrast to dualistic/ oppositional ontologies, deriving from Cartesian and Kantian views of the world, relational approaches operate from a symmetrical ontology (Normark 2010: 138). In this ontology, there exists no "*spurious asymmetry among human intentional action and a material world of causal relations*" (Latour 2005: 76). The notion of a symmetrical ontology shifts the focus from trying to recover meaning but instead to examining the way meaning is produced by exploring the "*entanglement of humans and things*" (Witmore 2007 547).

In this symmetrical world, the social is ever-changing, with elements being remade, dissolved or added to, creating bundles of relations (Jervis 2011b: 37; DeLanda 2016; see also Fowler & Harris 2015) (Fig. 3.10). These draw in not only physical things (including landscapes and

Actor Network Theory (ANT)	• ANT is not an interpretive theory, but instead operates from a position of description (Latour 2005: 147; Law, J. 1999: 1). • Model of distributed agency, where meaning is emergent rather than static (Van Oyen 2015: 65; Müller, M. 2015: 30; Latour 2005). • Rejects an essentialist view of the world composed of "*fixed and essential dualisms*" (Hodder 2012: 91), in favour of a world created through action (McMaster & Wastell 2005: 178; Fowler 2012: 21).
Assemblage Theory	• Developed by Deleuze and Guattari, (1987) and further established by DeLanda (2006, 2016) and Bennett (2010). • Intended to act as a provisional analytical tool (Muller 2015: 28; DeLanda 2006: 3). • Society and materials are fluid and dynamic, where properties are emergent (Normark 2010; DeLanda 2006: 11; Müller 2015: 28; Bennett 2010: 24). • Elements of an assemblage may be removed and plugged into other assemblages (DeLanda 2006: 10, 2016: 20). • Each assemblage does not represent "*a complete system*" (Fowler 2013a: 22), but a series of intersections comprising "*multiplicities of multiplicities*" (Deluze & Guattari 1980: 3). • Each assemblage can in turn become component parts of other assemblages creating a set of nested or entangled assemblages (DeLanda 2016: 20; Harris 2012: 177; Normark 2010: 134).

Table 3.3: *Key aspects of Actor Network Theory and assemblage theory*

objects) but wider networks of thought and action, ideas and materials, related to each other in webs of connectivity (Jervis 2011b: 37; Olsen 2003: 98; Knappett 2005: 30-33). In this scenario things and humans are mutually intertwined and non-divisible in a symmetrical ontology (DeLanda 2016: 39). By embracing the fluid nature of relations, this approach examines the various associations in which meaning is generated through an examination of traces or residues (Latour 2005:79; Van Oyen 2015: 65; Shanks 2007: 591). Through this ontological framework, society and materials can be positioned as fluid and dynamic, with emergent properties (Normark 2010; DeLanda 2006: 11; Müller, M 2015: 28; Bennett 2010: 24). Importantly, this shifts the focus from looking at just objects to how entities/ categories form and endure across time (Jervis 2011: 241; Fowler 2013a: 22). As will be argued, this has important ramifications in understanding pottery at a range of scales, including the interrelationship between different types. Through these "*exploratory approaches*" (Knappett 2013a: 8) the active role of novel materials in the formation of new worlds in the late 3rd millennium BC can be critiqued at a range of scales (Harris & Cipola 2017: 197).

Recent relational approaches in material culture studies have drawn on two overlapping schools of thought, assemblage theory and Actor Network Theory (ANT)[20] (Table 3.3). This includes ANT orientated approaches to *terra sigillata* (Van Oyen 2015), medieval pottery (Jervis 2011a, 2011b, 2014) and Prehistoric pottery (Jones, A. 2012; Fowler 2013a; Fowler & Wilkin 2016). Assemblage theory was notably employed by Normark (2010), Lucas (2012), and more specifically in several recent surveys of prehistory (Fowler 2013a; Harris 2013; Fowler & Harris 2015; Jones, A. 2012). Both interpretive approaches closely overlap with contextual methods (**Section 3.2.3**), the key difference lying in the employment of a symmetrical ontology. Instead, agency and meaning are an emergent effect stemming from relations, rather than being located with a specific agent (Witmore 2007: 547; Barad 2007: 137) (Table 3.3). Relational theory provides a framework within which to reposition older approaches to artefacts, including ideas of biography and performance. In the next section I will outline the approaches taken to types in this thesis, drawing in part on previous contextual and biographical approaches situated within a symmetrical ontology, and considering emergence and stabilisation of categories.

[20] *ANT emerged from poststructuralist critiques in science and sociology, examining the production of scientific knowledge, highlighting the emergent nature of data (Latour & Woolgar 1979, Latour 1998, 2005, cf. Dolwick 2009).*

Small pots	Individual eating or drinking vessels
Large open or closed forms	Plain cookpots
Large open, decorated or plain	Food preparation vessels
Closed decorated forms	Some cookpots, carrying containers or storage vessels
Large closed forms, decorated	Communal storage or transportation of goods

Table 3.4: *Functional categories of pottery at Windmill Hill, Wiltshire (after Howard 1981 26)*

3.3.1 Towards relational types

Affordances & Performance

Rather than static entities, pots can be viewed as assemblages, encompassing a suite of physical and non-physical properties (Fowler & Harris 131) (**Section 3.4.2**). The interaction of these components – parts of the artefacts or the object within its wider setting – give rise to a series of affordances (Knappett 2005: 47-9; Jervis 2014b: 185). Affordances frame and constrain the objects possibilities for action (Hutchby 2001: 444)[21]. For instance, a pot has the potential to act as a storage or cooking vessel, arising from the interaction of its component parts (form, fabric, decoration) and use (Jervis 2013: 28)[22]. The graded nature of domestic assemblages reflects on the various roles undertaken by pottery in a domestic context (**Section 2.5.2**). Vessel size provides a useful way of approaching and understanding roles. Previous studies have, akin to Clarke's model of fine to coarse wares, highlighted the relationship between different vessel sizes and function (*e.g.* Woodward 1995; Boast 1998; Jones, A 1999; Morris 2002). Vessels can be broadly divided into small, medium and large sizes. Howard in his analysis of the assemblage from Windmill Hill, Wiltshire, further subdivided these based on decoration and whether the vessel was closed or open (Table 3.4). Jones defined similar categories at Barnhouse, Orkney coupling vessel size with aspects of fabric and decoration (**Section 5.2.4**). At Northton, the large s-profile vessels likely functioned as storage vessels, with a series of small to medium-sized vessels suited to serving and food preparation (Fig. 2.3.1). Large closed low-carinated vessels from Hedderwick and Allt Chrisal (Figs. 2.27 & 2.29) can be envisaged as fulfilling storage roles, with the smaller accompanying vessels

[21] *This notion is akin to Schiffer's earlier idea of 'performance characteristics' (see also Skibo 1992). These encompass the mechanical, visual and acoustic properties of artefacts (1999: 167).*
[22] *These can be related to the notion of emergent causality which runs throughout assemblage theory (for a discussion of emergence and causality see DeLanda 2011).*

acting as eating or drinking vessels. These categories importantly are not bounded, instead a pot could, depending on a variety of factors, shift roles (Woodward 1995: 196).

Within ceramic assemblages there can exist specialised wares, designed for events, such as communal feasts or funerary events (Woodward 1999). The use of Grooved Ware in the earlier 3rd millennium is bound up with large scale consumptive events. Within these, decorative motifs may have played a key role in signalling identities and categorising pots (**Section 5.2.4**). Importantly, the selection of vessels for burial favours smaller vessels, ideal for eating/ drinking, implying that ideas of consumption were important in funerary rites. This is in part supported by residue analysis of Beakers, which have produced evidence for various substances (Guerra-Doce 2006) (**Section 3.3.3**). To this end, it can be argued that, conceptually, Beakers and Food Vessels could be categorised in similar ways due to their affordances. Alongside these roles a variety of other purposes could be envisaged (Brodie 1997: 299). This potential variance highlights the need to consider wider relationships within the funerary assemblage and the role of the mourners in these processes. In contrast to Beakers and Food Vessels, larger Collared and Cordoned Urns are categorised through their use as containers of cremated remains (**Section 2.4**). The use of these vessels could draw on ideas of storage and containment, with the pot acting as a proxy for the body.

In short, the selection and use of a vessel arises from a wider series of choices, relating to ideas of appropriateness alongside the wider ceramic milieu of the community. The material properties of the object are less subject to change, allowing it to endure across time – being lost, broken and rediscovered, gaining and loosing meanings (Fowler 2013a: 53-8; Jervis 2014a: 27). In contrast, the contexts in which an item is deployed and, consequently, its meaning or significance is subject to change (Jones, A. 2012: 105; Miller 1985: 166). In this regard vessels can be plugged into different assemblages creating a range of effects (Table 3.3). The permeable and mutable nature of types presents a challenge to formal modes of taxonomy and tightly bounded conceptual categories (Miller 1985: 187; Barrett 1991: 204). In this light, labelling vessels based on perceived visual similarity needs to be treated with caution. This is not to argue for a rejection of typology, but to emphasise the need for flexible systems where similarities and differences can be clearly articulated (Insoll 2007: 106-107; Sørenson 1997: 181). As noted, these differences cut across typological boundaries, creating a series of 'fuzzy sets'. An over-focus on naming and refining categories has distracted from the broader questions of the roles and processes pots emerged from and were subsequently engaged in. Rather than "*elaborate classifications that attempt to embrace the full complexity of variation*" what is needed is "*simple structure*" (Needham 2005: 183). This shifts the role

of typology to one that aids in understanding how categories of objects emerged and were stabilised (Van Oyen 2015: 66; Jones, A. 2012: 191; Barrett 1991: 204).

This is of importance in considering the relationship between domestic and funerary types, where vessels can move from storage or consumptive roles to expressing ideas of cosmology in funerary rites (see below). Through the combination of their components, funerary rites can express concepts and attitudes of the mourners, as well as aspects of identity. The placement and selection of grave goods reflects on a wide variety of concerns, including dealing with the affective aspects of death. Grave goods do not necessarily reflect the identity of the deceased but those of the mourners (Barrett 1994: 116). Identities expressed in funerary contexts can be real or ideal, reflecting on a broader set of ideas and relations (*cf.* Brück 2004). These can include notions of gender and kinship. Ideas of gender as seen can be reinforced using distinct artefacts, and can draw on everyday gender roles, such as pottery manufacture and food preparation (see below). In this context gender can be viewed as relational emerging from a series of wider relationships (Fowler 2004: 42-44). Notions of kinship in burials are not only articulated using artefacts, but also through situating the burial in proximity to earlier funerary sites (*e.g.* Garwood 2007: 44). Pairs of cists and cemetery sites are well documented during the late 3rd and 2nd millennium reflecting on potential networks of kinship (*ibid.*). The inclusion of different artefacts could indicate the occupations or specializations of the deceased and their role in society (Turek 2000: 432, 2001: 226; Salanova 2002). In the case of children this could include ascribed status as evidenced by well-furnished child burials (Fitzpatrick 2011: 212; see also Turek 2000; Martinez & Garcia 2015). At Barrow Hills, Radley a child was buried with three copper rings, which are among the earliest examples in Britain (Barclay, A. & Halpin 1998: 56). The range of roles signified could be multiple and include:

- Martial roles (Fitzpatrick 2011: 209; Turek 2015: 38; Case 2004a: 29)[23]. The inclusion of arrows, daggers and stone bracers (Fig. 2.3) in early burials as signalling a warrior class. This can also be associated with hunting (Mercer 2006).
- Craft specializations[24] (Fitzpatrick 2011: 212-24; Salanova 2002: 24-9; Turek 2004). Males with copper or bronze awls have been interpreted as leather workers (Brodie 1997: 300; but see Thomas, N. 2005: 222). Alongside their use in craft activities awls could have been used in tattooing (Thomas, N. 2005:222). Other craft roles include

[23] Case suggested that martial roles included the hunting of animals such as wild boar (2004b: 203). The inclusion of 'hunting equipment' (knives, archery gear) in burials was provided to further the interests of the living in the 'Otherworld'. These 'ancestors' were deployed to protect the living from malevolent entities, the knife serving to cut the throat and the Beaker to drink the blood (2004a: 29).
[24] These roles could include metalworking, flint working or pottery manufacture (cf. Salanova 2002)

metalworkers as suggested in the case of the Amesbury Archer (Fitzpatrick 2009; see also Clarke, D.L. 1970: 264-5).

The affective nature of the burial derives from the combination of all its components, rather than a single element. These roles need not be mutually exclusive, and vessels can take on similar roles in other contexts. A Beaker in a burial can still represent ideas of consumption, but this is plugged into wider notions of death and cosmology (Boast 1995: 78). In short, whilst objects can overlap in form and function, they can become loaded with a range of different meanings, emerging from the wider relationships in which an object is engaged (Knappett 2005:136). These potential roles as discussed previously are limited by the affordances of the object (Jervis 2014b: 185).

Affordances & Biography

A second key area alongside understanding roles and affordances is considering changes in roles and forms over time, situating the emergence of new categories of pottery within their broader temporal setting. In the context of the study area, this includes understanding the relationship between Grooved Ware and other coarse wares of the early 3rd millennium, alongside emergent Beaker types. As will be argued, whilst there is a degree of change in form this does not necessarily entail a change in function, raising questions of why new pot forms were adopted. The notion of biography, developed by Appadurai (1986) and Koptyoff (1986)

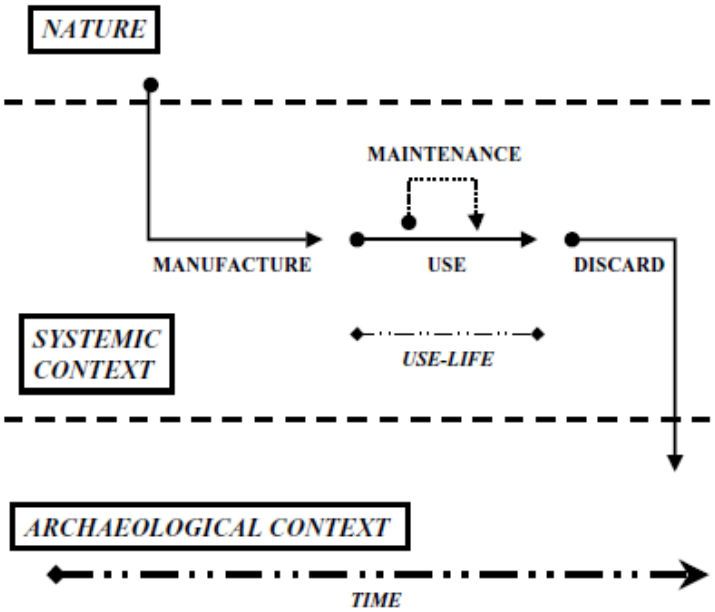


Figure 3.11: *Flow diagram illustrating life cycle of artefacts (Peña 2007: 7)*

provides a useful concept for articulating and examining the changing meaning and emergent nature of artefacts. This provides a useful counterpoint to relational approaches, which have been critiqued for lacking structure (*e.g.* Frieman 2014; see also Harris & Cipolla 2017:198-212). Conceptually, biography overlaps with ideas of assemblage and process through its examination of the links between people and things, alongside the way meanings and values are generated and transformed (Gosden & Marshall, Y. 1999: 170). Biography allows for the framing of changes in relations during the manufacture and subsequent use of an object/ entity, mapping the fluid relations that a pot emerges from and is subsequently involved in.

In his analysis of the formation of the archaeological record[25], Schiffer envisaged several stages through which artefacts moved, before eventually being deposited (Fig. 3.11). Schiffer noted the need to not only understand the final form, but the processes of its creation and subsequent use (1972: 158). Each stage can be viewed as a series of performances where relations are forged or unmade (Jones, A. 2012: 24; Van Oyen 2015a: 66). Importantly, performance provides sources of creativity, periods of regularity and repetition (Jones, A. 2012: 104). This need to consider the 'stages' of an artefacts creation and use has since been reiterated by several other scholars (*e.g.* Hurcombe 2007; Hammersmith 2010; Jones, A 2007; Peña 2007; Van Oyen 2015a, 2015b; Jervis 2011b, 2014a). The first and critical stage in a pot's biography[26] is its manufacture, which I will outline further, followed by a brief consideration of vessel use and discard.

3.3.2 Pots & Performance

The performative process of pot making draws together a series of relations (van der Leeuw 2008). These include the gathering together of not only physical materials, but the citation and iteration of wider ideas surrounding pottery manufacture (*cf.* Sofaer 2015: Chp. 7). Past studies of potting have drawn on the idea of the c*haîne opératoire* (*e.g.* Hammersmith 2011), where the focus lies not on the finished product, but the process from construction, through to use and discard (Damm 2012: 46; Dietler & Herbich 1998: 250). This approach highlights the fluid nature of pots, highlighting the choices involved in production, use and discard (van der

[25] Schiffer in his analyses sought to explain "how the archaeological record is produced in terms of explicit models, theories, and laws of how cultural systems operate". Whilst not biographical in its outset several aspects of this paper can be seen as closely overlapping, including the emphasis on considering the overall object trajectory from creation to deposition.

[26] Whilst some scholars have suggested replacing the notion of biography with trajectory (Hodder 2012, Van Oyen 2015a, 2015b) the notion is retained here to frame aspects of the vessels emergence and movement through different relations.

Leeuw 2008: 246; Hodder 2012: 43; Peña 2007: 8-9; see also Barley 1994: Chp. 2-3) (Fig. 3.11).

Clay as a malleable material has a range of affordances, which lends itself to the creation of a diverse array of forms (see Rice 2005: Part 2-3) (**Section 4.2.1**). Despite this vessel forms are typically constrained (Childe 1956: 37; Boast 2002: 98; see also Boast 1998). The performative process of potting involves a range of decisions that constrain the degree of variation (Barrett 1991: 202). As demonstrated by ethnographic studies, this includes codified modes of production and social taboos (*cf.* Gosselain 1999, 2000; Barley 1994; Dietler & Herbich 1998). Included among the latter are potentially gendered modes of production (*e.g.* Barley 1994: Chp. 3; see also Nelson 2004: 82-4). In this scenario aspects of relational identity stem from skills and knowledge (Brodie 1997: 302; Dobres 1995: 42). Ethnographic studies of pottery have highlighted that this extends to gendered pots, which affect the way they are used (Brodie 1997: 302-3; Barley 1984: Chp. 4). Similar patterns of association have been suggested for Beaker pottery (*e.g.*, Brodie 1997; Curtis & Wilkin *forthcoming*). Pottery has predominantly been interpreted as a female task, drawing in part on ethnographic studies. The role of women as potters was reinforced by Brodies interpretation of women as providing food and drink at funerary events, in contrast to males who would provide weapons, ornaments or tools (1997:301). This led Brodie to suggest that marriage networks acted as a key mechanism in the dispersal of ceramic technology (*ibid.* 307-11)[27]. There is a degree of circularity in this argument, with each assumption reinforcing the other, precluding other models of ceramic production. As noted by Rice nothing about pottery making should be inherently gendered (1991: 437). Ethnographic evidence suggests that rather than a divided task, women and men can share pottery making (Stahl & Cruz 1998; Barley 1984: 61). Given the range of stages involved in pottery production, tasks could have been differently gendered (*ibid.*). In the case of African pottery, a high degree of variability in manufacturing practices occurs across the region (Barley 1984: Chp. 3).

One final aspect is the intended function of the vessel. The construction of storage jars in comparison to drinking or cooking vessel entails a different set of factors (Orton & Hughes 2013: 81). As will be highlighted below, changes in vessel form can reflect on wider changes in consumptive practices (*e.g*. Barley 1984: Chp. 4). These notions serve to limit the range of potential forms that are made, creating distinct ceramic traditions (Barrett 1991: 202;

[27] *Isotopic studies suggest that women were not more mobile than men, implying that networks of marriage cannot fully explain the distribution and spread of Beaker material and associated practices. (see Parker Pearson et al. 2016: 632).*

Longworth 1984: 3). Like Clarke's polythetic categories, these can incorporate a shared range of attributes that can be found across multiple traditions. This is most clearly seen in the case of decoration, which occurs on multiple types (see **Chapter 2**).

A second key influence is the skill level and learning process of the potter (Damm 2012: 47; Gosselain 2011, 1992). These are sustained in part through bodily performance and muscle memory invoked during the forming process (Connerton 1989: 72; Gosselain 1992: 582). Coupled with methods of teaching, this creates codified modes of production, creating distinct ceramic traditions (Sofaer 2015: 36; Neff 1992: 144). This aspect is related to the iterative process of knowledge transmission, drawing on the twinned process of memory and citation (*cf.* Jones, A 2007). Pots represent recurrent citations, citing past forms and decoration, drawing on aspects of memory (*i.e.* Jones, A. 2001; 2007: 135-40; Lucas 2012: 201; Gell 1998). This process of citation in pottery manufacture is reinforced through teaching and inherited knowledge, which serve to routinize the assemblage through time (Rosch 1999: 66; see also Gosselain 1999, 2000, 2011). When producing a pot, the potter draws on the wider ceramic milieu (or tradition) in which they operate (Gell 1998: 237; Lucas 2012: 201; Gosselain 2011: 213-5; Neff 1992: 14)[28]. This involves the citation or iteration of existing forms invoking past performances through situated practice (Jones, A. 2012: 21; Gosselain 2011: 215). This chimes with MacSween's notion of an underlying grammar to Grooved Ware, where similarity and difference were expressed through the tradition (1995: 43). Undecorated vessels sharing aspects of form and fabric with decorated Grooved Ware represent one further element of this grammar (**Section 2.2**). In the case of Beakers, this involves the citation of Grooved Ware modes of decoration, whilst Food Vessels cite aspects of Beakers. These motifs are in turn found on other portable artefacts, including metalwork and jet necklaces (see Jones, A. 2001).

Production can also be innovative, presenting a rupture with past performances, instigating changes in the performative process (Jones, A. 2012: 24, 2007: 87). Rupture can come about through the end of performance with renegotiation taking place[29]. This can in part be triggered by the emergence of new material forms or ideas. 'Hybrid' forms represent potential episodes of experimentation, with traits from different traditions creating a vessel that is neither one nor the other. The processes behind the emergence of these unique forms requires critical appraisal. These vessels need to be situated within dynamic frameworks that consider ideas of

[28] *Neff defines a ceramic tradition as "supra-individual information-containing entities" (1992: 144), similar to the notion of assemblage under discussion here.*
[29] *Rupture can also occur through accidental innovation (Neff 1992: 144).*

function and use. The advent of Beakers and single burials can be viewed as a point of rupture, departing from pre-existing ceramic types. The nature of this varies regionally with a variety of renegotiations taking place, creating a suite of distinct outcomes. This can be stimulated by the wider networks in which communities operate, which can alternatively be facilitated or constrained by aspects of geography. Maritime contacts clearly played a key role in the dissemination of materials and ideas during the period (*e.g.* Cunliffe 2001; Van de Noort 2006, 2011, 2012; Garrow & Sturt 2017)

The degree of rupture can vary from minor to major, but the latter is often uncommon (Gosselain 1992: 582). As Gosselain documented in his study of African pottery, apprentice potters emphasize the importance of doing as their parents did, and that change would jeopardize the outcome (2011: 215, 1992: 582). The teacher plays a key role in restricting rupture by ensuring that correct gestures are repeated, which consequently become incorporated as "*unconscious psycho-motor schemata*" (*ibid.*)[30]. Apprentice potters could have been children, who were taught from an early age how to produce pots, codifying pot making from an early age (Garrido-Pena & Herrero-Corral 2015). Traditional practices deriving from routinized performances aid in stabilising vessel types. A recent study of pots from the Hebrides demonstrates the potential of long term conservativism within British prehistoric ceramics (Copper 2016). Whilst specialised types such as Beakers, Food Vessels and Grooved Ware come and go, they exist alongside a suite of more conservative plain wares, notably a suite of bucket/ tub vessels. Due to their utilitarian roles and affordances, these represent stable and long-lasting forms used throughout the 3rd - 2nd millennium BC (**Section 2.3**).

3.3.3 Consumption and use

One of the primary roles of pottery is in the consumption and storage of food stuffs (Jones, A. 1999). Domestic vessels are involved in a range of processes, moving through different roles and contexts over time, according to a variety of factors (Jones, A. 1999: 57; Van Oyen 2013: 97). This can include the abstraction of domestic vessels into a funerary context (ApSimon 1969: 53; Gibson, A. 1984: 77).[31] These roles in part are constrained by the affordances of

[30] The importance of learning in the stabilisation of categories was highlighted by Rosch (1999), emphasizing that good and stable categories better lend themselves to the learning process than poor or ill-defined categories.

[31] Abstraction could have involved the literal taking of a vessel from a domestic context or the representational selection of an appropriate domestic form from the wider domestic repertoire for use in a funerary context (Needham 2005: 175)

each vessel. Since the use of ceramics is bound up with the production, consumption and storage of plant and animal foodstuffs, we can more clearly define the relationship between disparate elements of the culturally classified world by considering the relationship between ceramics and foods (Jones, A. 1999).

The types of vessels employed are connected to their roles, as well as being informed and entwined with wider ideas (Barley 1984: Chp.4). These can include the performative aspects of consumption and the nature of foods consumed (Dietler & Hayden 2001). Consumptive events encompass a wide number of consumptive practices not all of which would have involved the use of pottery (Brück 1999: 5). One key arena is the feast, consumptive events which diverge from daily eating (Hayden 2014: 8). These occur for numerous reasons including weddings, funerals and calendrical events (Serjeantson 2006: 114). The importance of feasting and its role in the maintenance of social groups has been highlighted by several scholars (*e.g.* Dietler 1996; Hayden 1996; Hodder 2012; *cf.* papers in Dietler & Hayden 2001a). This has been underscored by several ethnographic studies which have examined the central role of feasts in societies (for a recent study see Flannery & Marcus 2012*)*

Feasts draw people and things together often in key locales (Dietler & Hayden 2001b: 4). These locales can include the use of specialized structures (Woodward 2000a: 304), although often the house will form a key locus (Hodder 2012: 184; see also Flannery & Marcus 2012). Feasts could also involve specialised equipment, including distinct forms of pottery, which are not employed on a daily basis (*i.e.* Dietler 2001: 97). In these scenarios, not only the pots, but also the types of foods consumed might have been special, and not consumed every day (Woodward 1999: 3). Grooved Ware from across Britain is frequently associated with ruminant or lipid fats (Mukherjee *et al.* 2008)[32]. This could suggest that Grooved Ware was employed for the consumption and storage of certain foodstuffs, including dairy products in Orkney (**Section 5.2.4**). At Durrington Walls, Wiltshire, Grooved Ware was associated with the slaughter and consumption of pigs at distinct times in the year (Parker Pearson *et al.* 2007). Similar consumptive events have been proposed for other Grooved Ware using sites including Balfarg, Fife (Barclay, G.J. & Russell-White 1993). At Balfarg, residue analysis suggested the presence of henbane (Moffat 1993), but re-evaluation has since brought this into question (Long *et al.* 1999: 51). Past studies of Beakers highlighted the possible use of these pots in drinking rites, as suggested by Sherratt (1987, 1991) and Shennan's comparison of Beakers to

[32] *Pottery due to its porous microstructure can preserve quantities of degradable biomolecules derived from their usage. Investigations of these residues have been able to identify a range of commodities from lipid fats to beeswax.*

the Peyote cult (1976) (**Section 3.2.2**). Scott suggested that Beakers could have been employed in the consumption of hallucinogenic substances (Scott, B. 1978). Residue analysis of Beakers from Britain and Europe has indicated the presence of various substances (Guerra-Doce 2006). Analysis of Beaker assemblages from the Continent have highlighted the role of Beakers in commensality feasts, involving the use of specific sets of vessels including Beakers and carinated bowls (Garrido-Pena *et al.* 2011: see papers in Jiménez *et al.* 2011). Ethnographic studies provide a wide array of examples of specialised pots and their role in commensality. Guests in Zulu households would be offered beer in a large decorated pot, an *ukhamba*. These are employed alongside smaller vessels, *umancishanem*, the small size of which suggests that either the host is short of beer or the guest should drink his beverage and leave (Barley 1984: 69)

The second primary arena in which vessels are deployed is within funerary settings. As noted, funerary practices involve the gathering together of people and things, with the burial acting as a nodal point. The drawing together of these various elements creates a series of effects. The selection of vessels can be connected to wider ideas of gender and cosmology, as well as reflecting on wider macro scale networks through which ideas of burial and pottery move. As noted by Walsh, these can be allied to aspects of age and health (2013). This can also impact on the vessels used in domestic contexts, with some vessels viewed as inappropriate during times of mourning (Barley 1984: 69). The role of pots in burials during the later 3rd millennium can be mapped against changing burial practices. Inhumations are frequently associated with smaller vessels ideal for containing liquids or foodstuffs. Residues from Ashgrove, Fife revealed the presence of mead (Dickson 1978), whilst a Beaker from Broomend, Aberdeenshire, contained a bone spoon, possibly for a gruel-like substance (Davidson, C.B. 1870: 116; Shepherd, I. 1986: 10)[33]. This consumptive role, as noted, overlaps with its function in domestic settings, blurring the distinction between contexts. With the gradual increase in the size of cremation vessels, they were eventually used as containers for human remains. Alongside these, other components of the assemblage are renegotiated, including a decrease in the size of the funerary setting and the role of other grave goods.

3.3.4 Disposal and deposition

Owing to their ceramic nature vessels are subject to breakage. The rate of breakage itself can be affected by the role undertaken by the vessel. Vessels used on a daily basis are more prone

[33] *Davidson originally interpreted the spoon as the remains of a lamp akin to oil lamps found in the 19th century (1870: 116-7)*

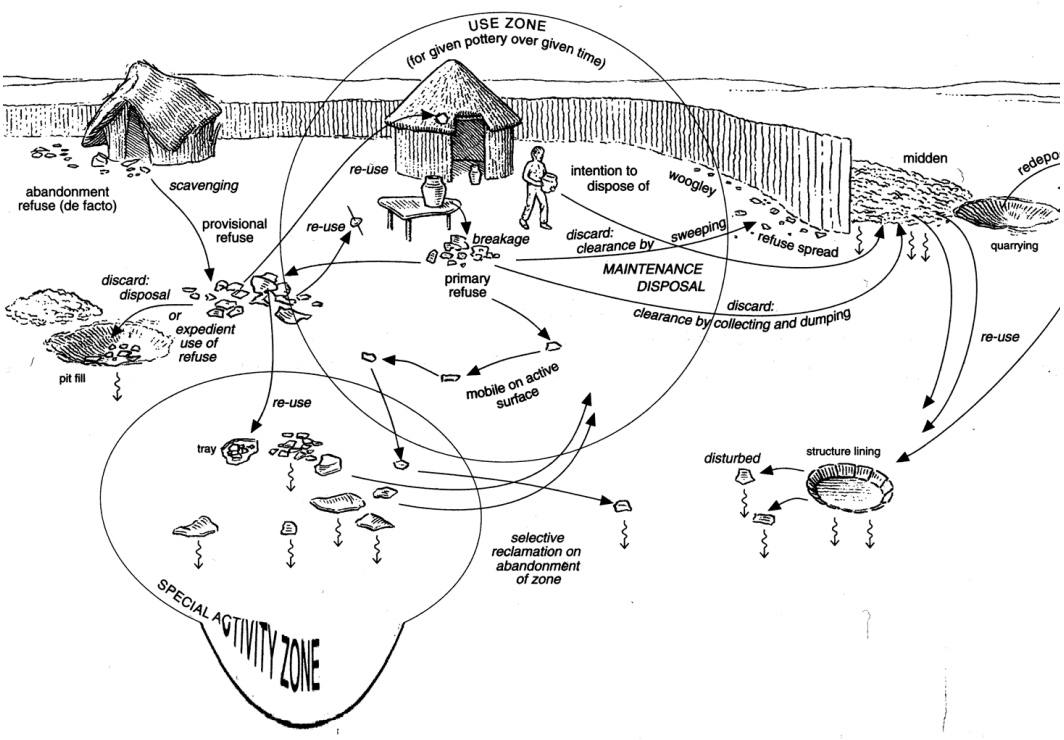


Figure 3.12: *Schematic illustration showing diversity in refuse cycles of broken pottery (Needham & Spence 1996: Fig. 108)*

to breakage, whilst larger storage vessels are likely to last longer (see Arnold 1988). Vessels may also be broken as part of certain activities, including funerary rites. In the case of the latter this can be connected to notions of pollution in which the vessel by association with the deceased or the funerary is deemed unsuitable for continued use (Parker Pearson 1999: 21-7). As highlighted at Runnymede, Surrey, vessels can be discarded in a variety of ways (Needham & Spence 1996) (Fig. 3.12). As emphasised by Needham, the study of depositional practices in a domestic context is complicated by the fact that most deposits are not found *in situ*, having been moved and redeposited (Needham 1996b: 19). Similar processes occur at chambered cairns and funerary contexts (Brück 2004a: 311). Non-funerary deposits range from structured deposits, which are often recorded from Neolithic pits, which contain a variety of artefacts (Thomas, J. 1999: 64-74). At Kintore, these deposits were divided into a variety of categories, ranging from those with stray finds to more deliberate deposits (Cook & Dunbar 2008: Table 34) (Table 2.7). These range from the mundane to burials and structured deposits. Notions of discard can be connected to wider ideas of cosmology, as in the case of the Marakwet (Moore 1986:110, 115). Ash and goat dung are kept separate, as it is believed that the goats would die should the two substances be mixed (*ibid.*). In Orkney, Jones has highlighted the often-

structured nature of deposition including the preferential treatment of certain animal remains, potentially linking places and animals (1998: 318).

Deposits can also include curated artefacts. At Lockington, Leicestershire, two incomplete vessels had been curated before deposition (Woodward 2000b: 57). Ideas of curation and subsequent deposition as shown in this case need to be carefully considered when dating pottery assemblages. As will be seen in the regional studies, several examples of mixed and residual finds can be identified. At chambered cairns - where fragments of vessels are often found - it could be the case that only select sherds were deposited, linking elements of the past (the cairn) with the present (the pot) (Chapman 2000: Chp. 3). This notion will be revisited later in the regional studies.

3.3.5 Biographies, Contexts & Process

In this brief review, I have highlighted the need to consider the nature of not only the pots as assemblages, but also consider their involvement in varied contexts over time. These relations draw in not only things and people, but ideas extending to notions of cosmology, spatial organisation and modes of consumption. By approaching these biographically, we can begin to examine intersections and the emergent meanings from these at a range of temporal and spatial scales. Through the course of its 'life' – from manufacture, use and discard – the vessel moves through a variety of contexts and processes. Normative typologies, as critiqued earlier, fail to explore changes in the way vessels are categorised. This stems in part from the ontological position of typologies and the questions asked of the material under study. Whilst ceramic types of the later 3rd millennium can be argued to have a "*particular historical significance*" (Needham: 2005: 174), we need to go beyond similarity and representation, to instead examining the ways categories of pottery emerged and were subsequently stabilised. Embracing this position enables a clearer overview of the formation and stabilisation of categories and their position in wider assemblages (*i.e.* Garwood 2007: 30-2). In the final section I will draw these disparate threads of categories, biography and process together, summarising the interpretive position employed in this thesis.

3.4 Discussion: From normative to fluid narratives

In the opening half of this chapter I highlighted past approaches to interpreting the changes that took place in the later 3rd millennium. These narratives largely portrayed the period as normative, composed of oppositional cultural or systematic units. In the 1980s and the

phenomenological turn of the 1990s there was an upsurge in contextual and biographical approaches to the past. The emergence of relational approaches has furthered this position, providing a wide array of frameworks and language to construct alternative narratives of the past. Importantly, these allow for a reframing of previous approaches, including the notion of biography.

Adopting a relational view allows for a move away from oppositional categories of humans and things, agency and the social. This thesis operates from a view of the world that is active and nonlinear, shifting the focus to understanding entities and their relations. Whilst overlapping in part with notions of polythetic categories (Clarke, D.L. 1968), categories in this scenario are permeable and mutable. Importantly, categories extend to considering the way vessels are used alongside their physical traits (Miller 1985). This creates a series of potentially fluid categories, where vessels can be plugged into a range of different assemblages creating different effects. Similar arguments can be advocated for identity which is similarly relational (*e.g.* Fowler 2004). Aspects of identity can be expressed through grave goods as well as everyday roles, including pottery production. These categories themselves can be fluid, stemming from wider sets of relations.

The approach adopted here does not involve the rejection of past approaches but situates them within a different ontological perspective. The adoption of a biographical approach to pottery is one such example, framing different moments in the life span of the pot. This framework facilitates an examination of an objects changing meanings from its initial construction to deposition. Importantly, the relational approach adopted here does not represent an interpretive theory *per se*, but rather a different way of conceptualising relations (*cf.* Shanks 2007). These approaches provide an important means of reconceptualising the archaeological record from one of static entities played against each other to one of intertwined entities caught in webs of connectivity. These ideas present a different mode of thinking, and I argue that to take this forward requires a deconstruction of present black boxes, inverting current category-orientated approaches. Instead of dealing with categories as *a priori*, the processes relating to how ceramic categories came into being, persisted and dissipated at a range of scales need to be considered. The theory outlined here has been focused on description rather than implicit interpretation, interpretation itself emerging through description. This has attempted to emphasise other key themes beyond those traditionally discussed (**Chapter 2**). In summary, there are three interpretive strands to this project:

1. ***Material culture & People:***

   This thesis operates from a symmetrical view, where agency is a distributed emergent property, stemming from the interaction of different components. These assemblages operate from a symmetrical ontological position rather than a normative oppositional view. Objects comprise durable elements alongside ephemeral components. These are categorised through performance and are not stable. Pots move through a variety of contexts, both physical and non-physical, over time and are connected to wider networks of ideas and things. Affordances emerge from the interaction of different components and can constrain possibilities of action.

2. ***Emergent and performative nature of material culture:***

   This thesis takes the older notion of biography and reframes it within a symmetrical ontology. This allows for a framing of the different stages of an objects existence, from its initial inception to deposition. Through these performances the emergent nature of artefacts can be more fully critiqued. By employing biography as a framework, the process behind the emergence and stabilisation of categories can be closely critiqued. This includes considering aspects of manufacture and its relationship to wider assemblages, including ideas of consumption, burial and notions of gender.

3. ***Typology & emergent meanings:***

   Rather than taking categories such as Beakers as *a priori*, this study examines processes by which categories of pottery emerged. Pots are formed from a series of relations (manufacture) and are connected in wider networks of relations (use, discard) which are drawn into other assemblages. These can be viewed from a biographical perspective. The meaning of pots is not fixed but emergent, deriving from the interaction of other components of the assemblage. These include the affordances that arise from the interaction of aspects of form, fabric and decoration. To provide a basis for the study, and avoid a slide into relativism, a range of nodal forms are employed and further defined in the regional studies. These are considered further in the next

chapter. The relationship of these assemblages to other regions will be considered in the final section of the thesis.

In the next chapter I will take this approach forward by examining the physical aspects of pottery further, situating this within the notion of performance discussed here. This will be followed by a summary of the principal forms employed during this thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR
CLASSIFYING THE POTS

4.1 Introduction

Developing from the preceding critique and subsequent discussion of the interpretive approach adopted in this thesis, this chapter outlines the principal ceramic classifications used to describe the pottery in the regional studies in **Part II**. The classificatory scheme employs current terminology to define a range of recurrent forms. Importantly these forms do not in themselves hold any interpretive weight. As discussed in **Chapter 3**, the significance of each vessel is derived from the wider processes and associations in which it is involved. Vessel forms are further defined in each of the regional studies following the theoretical approach set out in **Chapter 3**. The adopted approach aims to facilitate an understanding of the nature and definition of forms at a local level. Before outlining the classifications, I will explore the three main aspects of pottery: form, fabric and decoration. Throughout the course of this review I will emphasise the modular and additive nature of pottery production, further highlighting the relational nature of potting.

4.2 Fabric, form and decoration

4.2.1 Fabric & Form

From the outset, potting involves a range of choices, including in the selection of raw materials and subsequent construction of the vessel (Fig. 4.1). These as noted are affected by factors such as the intended vessel and wider ideas of potting (**Section 3.3.2**). The first critical stage of pot making lies in the sourcing and processing of clay (Barley 1994: 21; Taylor, G. 2013; Orton & Hughes 2013; Rice 2005). This requires not only the use of correct clays but the sourcing of material for temper (Barley 1994: 21; Taylor, G. 2013; Rice 2005: 117-9). Through the mixing of clay and other materials, the qualities of the fabric can be altered to give the final product distinct properties (Rice 2005:118-19). A wide variety of additional materials can be employed as temper, enhancing the potential affordances of the final pot (Taylor, G. 2013: 124-5; Jervis 2014: 29). As noted in **Chapter 3**, these depend in part upon the intended

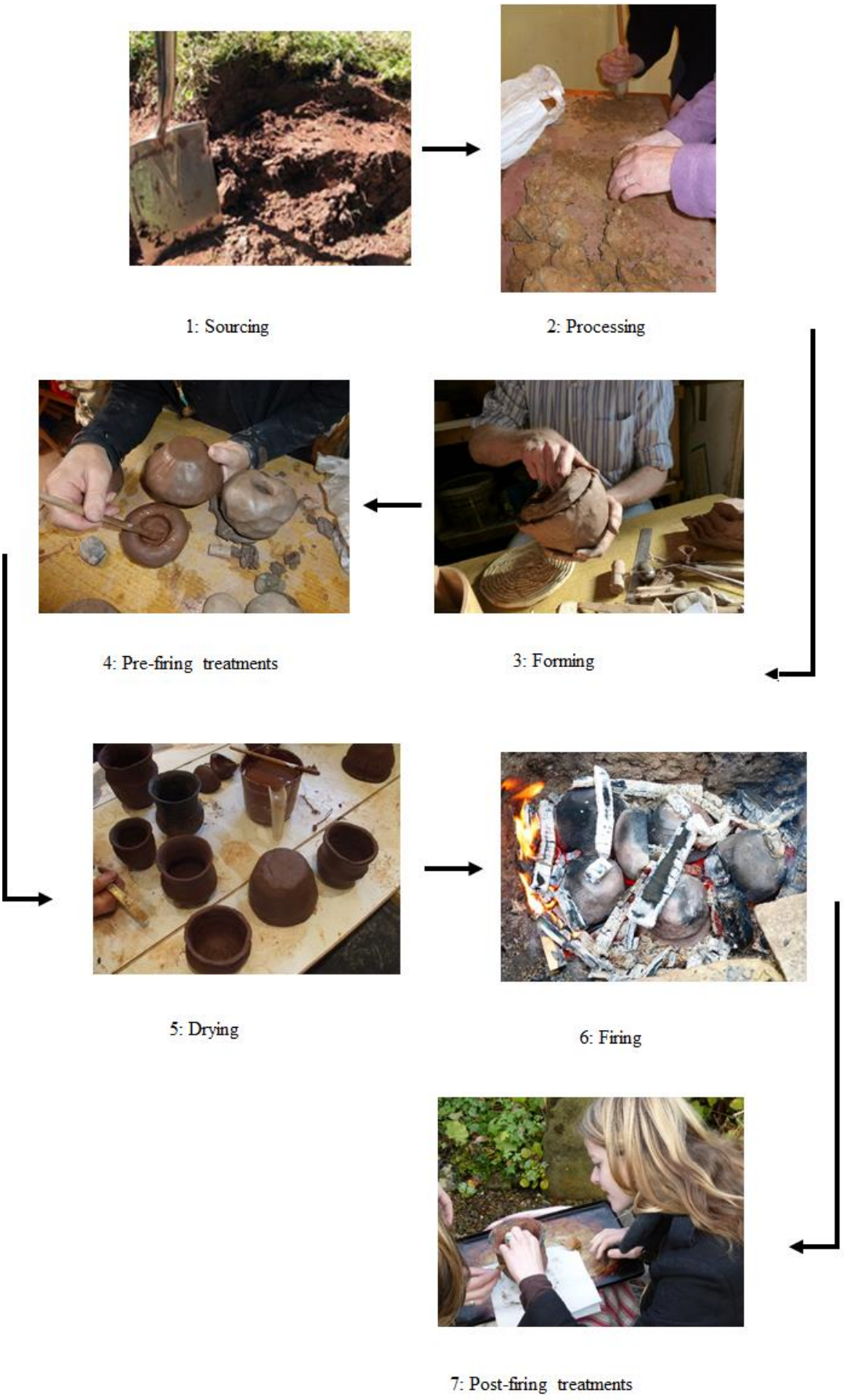


Figure 4.1: *Principal stages in pottery manufacture (Photos, Author (2,5,6), M. Copper (3,4,7)*

Figure 4.2: *Developing the thumb pot (C. Copper)*

Figure 4.3: *Adding additional coils to the thumb pot (C. Copper)*

Figure 4.4: *Forming and adding further coils (C. Copper)*

Figure 4.5: *Shaping the pot (C. Copper)*

Figure 4.6: *Examples of coil joins in cross section (Longworth 1984: Fig 1)*

function of the vessel. In the case of Shetland and Orkney the use of steatite as a tempering agent aids in increasing the thermal shock resistance of vessels (MacSween 2005: 37). The inclusion of certain tempering agents can extend beyond practical means. The addition of grog (crushed pottery), has been cited as referencing older pots carrying a symbolic meaning (Woodward 2000a: 294, 2000b: 59).

The form of the vessel is a modular and additive construct, comprising several distinct elements added and defined during production (Law, R. 2008: 83; Wilkin 2013: 74). Numerous techniques can be employed to build and define the pot, including coil or ring building and straps (*cf.* Barley 1994; Taylor, G. 2013). One mode of construction involves the use of pinch pots where the lower half of the body can largely be built as one pot (Taylor, G. 2013: 128; Hammersmith 2011: 112; Barley 1994: 24) (Fig. 4.2). Once the initial ball of clay has been exhausted, further coils of clay can be added to build up the walls, creating a range of distinctive joins in the cross section (Barley 1994: 24; Gibson, A. & Woods 1990: 37) (Figs. 4.4 & 4.6). Through the process of pulling, the walls of the vessel are compressed, increasing the height (Barley 1994: 24) (Fig. 4.5). The joins between the coils represent weak points in the vessel, and these often form the lines along which the vessel breaks (Gibson, A.

Figure 4.7: *Fracturing along coil joins (Taylor, G. 2013: Figure 11)*

& Woods 1990: 37) (Fig. 4.7). In the case of larger vessels (such as Grooved Ware or Collared Urns) the initial ball of clay is quickly used, necessitating the use of extra coils (Taylor, G. 2013: 128; Longworth 1984: 4). In short, the bigger the vessel the greater the number of additional coils needed, introducing further lines of weakness into the vessel, affecting its potential use life and role.

The body of the vessel is typically divided into several components including the body, base, neck and rim (Figs. 4.8 & 4.9). The plastic medium of clay allows for the addition or removal

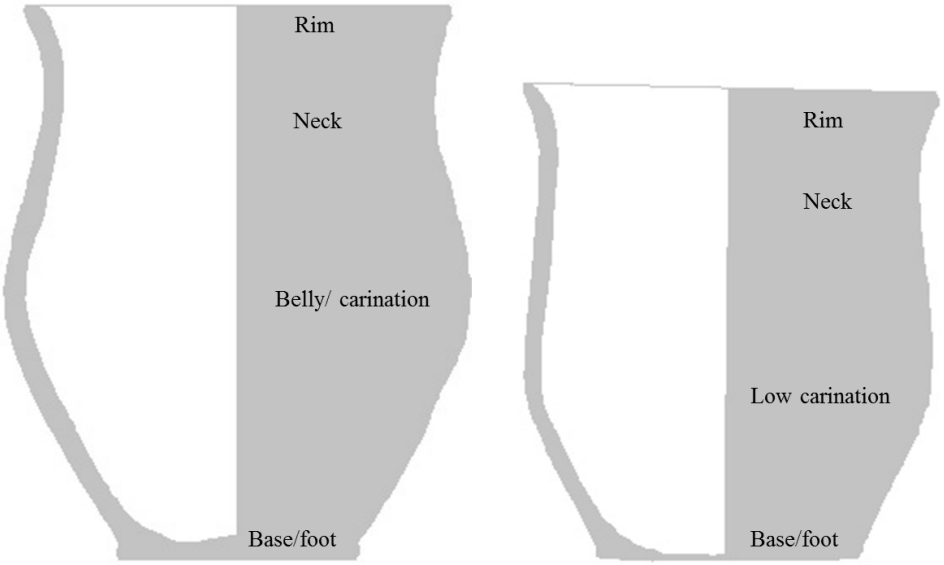


Figure 4.8: *Beaker vessels key components (sinuous left, carinated right)*

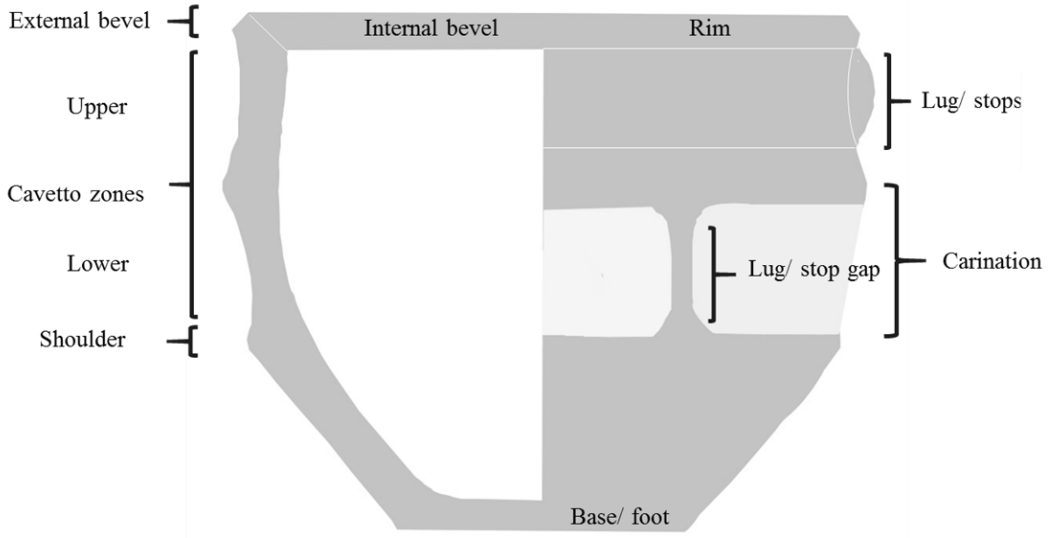


Figure 4.9: *Food Vessel key components*

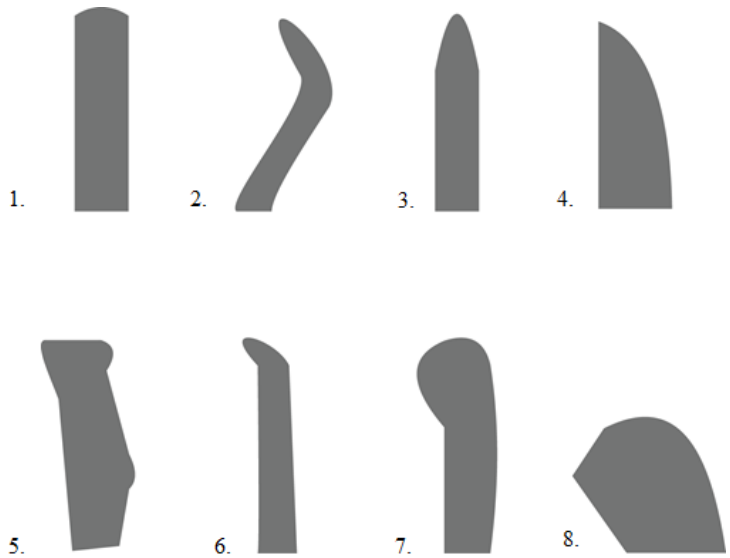


Figure 4.10: *Simple rim forms (SR):*

Key: ***1.*** *Flat rim* ***2.*** *Simple rounded. Can be everted* ***3.*** *Simple pointed. Can be everted creating outward pointing projection* ***4.*** *Simple rounded inner edge. Can range from slight to deep* ***5.*** *Flat with inward projection, some examples have cordons below* ***6.*** *Expanded with slight pointed external projection. Examples can be ambiguous overlapping with beveled variants* ***7.*** *Beaded / rounded* ***8.*** *Pointed*

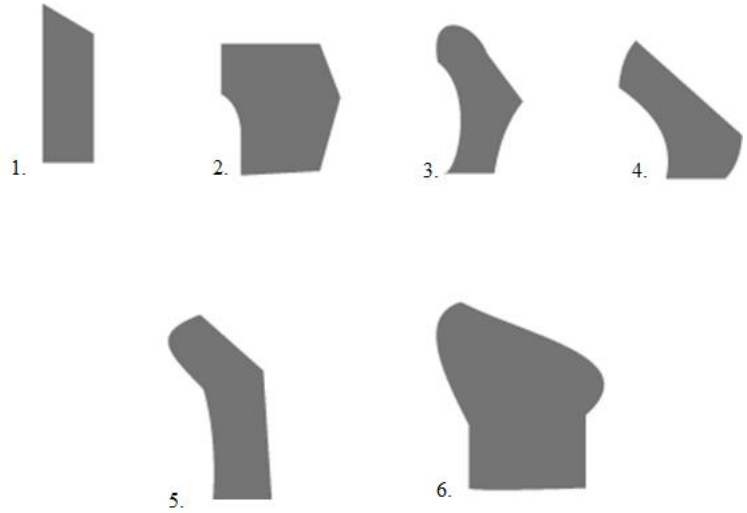


Figure 4.11: *Beveled rim forms (BR):*

Key: ***1.*** *Internal bevel, flat or slightly rounded outer profile* ***2.*** *Club/ collar like rim. Variants include those with angular profile, whilst others can have pointed internal bevels* ***3.*** *Expanded rim with internal bevel creating roughly triangular cross section. Internal bevel can be concave* ***4.*** *Shallow internal bevel with short external bevel, overlap with BR3* ***5.*** *Short internal bevel with rounded exterior* ***6.*** *Expanded/ thickened rim with internal bevel rounded exterior and slight internal projection.*

of further components during construction (Sofaer 2015: 6). Extra elements include collars, shoulders and carinations (Taylor, G. 2013: 129). The arrangement and configuration of these depends on the type of pot being made. For instance, Grooved Ware vessels tend to lack shoulders and defined necks (Fig. 2.6)[1].

In contrast, certain forms sport distinct carinations along with shoulders, notably Food Vessels (Fig. 4.9). Shoulders range from rounded to sharply defined, creating a sinuous or angular profile. The area below the shoulder/ carination can vary, with angular to convex profiles. Other points of variation include the rim and base of the vessel. Rims range from simple to expanded and beveled types (Figs. 4.10 & 4.11). Bases range from simple to slightly pedestalled, whilst internally some pots have an omphalos. These are created by flattening the base of the pot with a paddle (Taylor, G. 2013: 129). Following the definition and forming of the vessel, the next stage involves the decoration and finishing of the vessel.

4.2.2 Decoration

The decoration of a pot comprises three key elements: techniques (Fig. 4.12), motifs (Fig. 4.13) and the overall decorative scheme. Prior to the application of decoration, the surfaces of the pot are finished and refined through burnishing and scraping, removing external grits. Decoration is created using a variety of mediums, and the major decorative techniques defined in this study include:

1. Twisted cord (Fig. 4.12.1)
2. Whipped cord (Fig. 4.12.2)
3. Incision – ranging from light to deep, including stab and drag (Fig. 4.12.3)
4. Other impressions – techniques using a range of other implements including:
    - Comb impressions (Fig. 4.12.4)
    - Impressions created using sticks or bones (Fig. 4.12.5)
    - Cardium (Shell) impressions (Fig.4.12.6)
    - False-relief (Fig.4.21)

One further decorative technique involves the use of slips or coloured pigments (*cf.* Rice 2005: 148-52). Traces of coloured pigments rarely survive, but a Beaker from Kintore, had white

[1] *Whilst rare examples of shoulders have been recorded among Grooved Ware vessels including from Dunragit (Fig. 2.7)*

Figure 4.12: *Principal decorative techniques:*

Key: ***1.*** *Twisted cord – right, impressions made whilst clay still wet, left impressions made when leather hard* ***2.*** *Whipped cord* ***3.*** *Incision made with sharp implement* ***4.*** *Coarse, medium and fine comb impressions* ***5.*** *Impressions made using hollow tube* ***6.*** *Cardium (Shell) impressions*

inlay pressed into the comb impressions (MacSween 2008: 188). Similar white inlay, formed from calcined bone, has been recorded on several other Beakers from Aberdeenshire (Curtis *et al.* 2010). At present, it is not possible to state whether the bone is human or animal (*ibid.*). Recent discoveries at the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Orkney have revealed evidence for the use of a range of pigments in the decoration of Grooved Ware (Towers *et al.* 2015: 13) (Fig. 4.13).

Decorative schemes across the study area often combine one or more technique. Twisted cord, comb impressions and incision are frequently combined. Motifs are highly variable and not confined to single types. For instance, twisted cord has been noted on both Grooved Ware and Beakers. Vessels have been labelled as Beaker based on decoration, although this in itself is not a definite indicator (Gibson, A. 1984: 93). At Kilellan Farm, vessels were initially assigned to the Beaker tradition based on the presence of cord impressions. Subsequent analysis by Cowie highlighted that these vessels belonged instead to a local tradition of upright rim vases

Figure 4.13: *Painted Grooved Ware from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11) (Towers et al. 2015:13) (not to scale)*

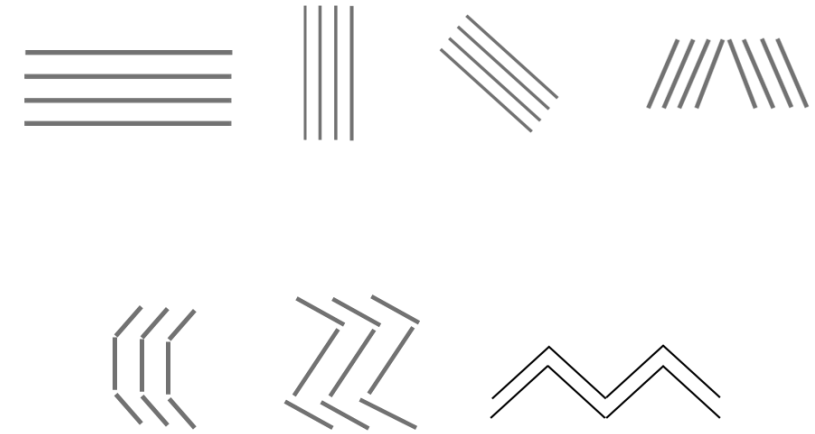
(2005: 74) (**Section 2.5.2**). Instead, motifs and techniques are drawn from wider 'artistic repertories' and the existence of decorative parallels could be of minor significance (Gell 1998: Chp. 3; Cowie, R. 2005: 74). The arrangement of motifs is likely to provide a better signifier of identity as opposed to individual motifs, which can be easily be borrowed and diffused over a large area (Vander Linden 2004: 10; *cf.* Dietler & Herbich 1998). Similar motifs occur on other artefact types, including metal work and rock art (Heath 2012: Chp. 4; Taylor, J. 1970; Thomas, A. 2016). Certain techniques and motifs may cite patterns found on organic vessels, including allusions to basketry (see Hurcombe 2008) (**Section 2.5.2**). Motifs range from simple lines to complex geometric shapes (Fig 4.14). Five broad motif groups were defined for the study:

A. Simple lines
B. Herringbone
C. Geometric shapes (incl. infilled hexagons/ triangles)
D. Lattice
E. Panels and metopes

In addition to these motifs, vessels were decorated with random impressions, including paired fingernail or rounded impressions made using a bone or stick (Fig. 4.12.5). The final – and perhaps most important – element is the decorative scheme, composed of various individual motifs. Each of the traditions discussed in **Chapter 2**, whilst sharing techniques and motifs, tend to sport distinct decorative schemes. Beaker vessels show a preference for banded decoration, whilst Food Vessels often lack linear zones, instead preferring all-over schemes (Wilkin 2010b: 20) (Figs. 2.5 & 2.9). In some cases, the internal bevel of the rim acts as a focus for decoration (Gibson, A. & Woods 1990: 102).

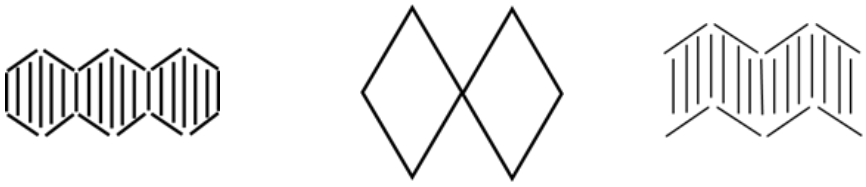
4.2.3 Discussion

As highlighted in **Section 3.3.1** pots are dynamic entities, encompassing a variety of different physical and non-physical aspects. Vessels are constructed through the combination of various traits, individually these are not indicative of certain vessel types (Law, R. 2008: 73; see also Clarke, D.L. 1974). In the preceding section I highlighted the modular nature of pots and the way different elements can be combined to create unique forms. These included the manipulation of elements of the form, fabric and decoration. The extent to which these can be manipulated is constrained by several factors, including the skill of the potter, modes of teaching and codification, and the wider ceramic milieu of the potter (**Section 3.3.2**). The

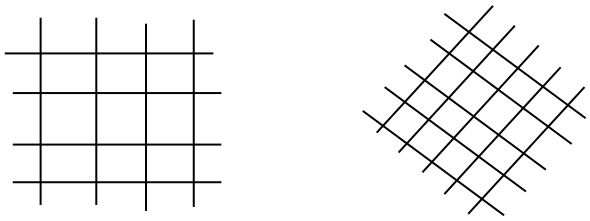


A: Simple Lines

B: Herringbone



C: Geometric Shapes



D: lattice

Figure 4.14: *Examples of motifs found on later 3rd millennium pottery*

addition or subtraction of elements creates a wide diversity of forms that in part reference preceding types. Past approaches to typology have tended to mask this variability in favour of typological cohesion, obscuring the diverse processes at play (Damm 2012: 42). This reinforces the need for a flexible system of classification where differences and similarities

can be clearly articulated. This requires a grounded regional approach that shifts the focus to considering regional types first and wider parallels second (**Section 1.2**). Without an understanding of the former, the significance of wider parallels is hard to contextualise. Having considered the key elements of pottery and aspects of the manufacturing process, I will in the following section outline the scheme employed in this thesis.

4.3 Principal Classifications

4.3.1 Defining the scheme

As highlighted in **Chapter 2**, considerable variety is encountered among pottery types. As discussed in **Section 3.3**, this is related to aspects of the wider roles and function of vessels, stressing the need to consider contextual factors. To avoid an over focus on types a limited approach to classification was adopted. The aim of this was to provide a flexible mode of analysis for considering the emergence of regional ceramic types. Form is employed as the basis for the scheme, but a range of other attributes are considered. The principal forms examined in this study include Beakers, Food Vessels and a suite of bucket/ tub vessels. These include Collared and Cordoned Urns, which fall at the end of the period under study (see **Section 2.4**). No Collared Urns were recorded from the study area[2], whilst Cordoned Urns were restricted to a handful of examples. Several further unprovenanced urns were recorded. These were not studied in detailed and are outlined in the regional appendices (*cf.* **Apps. C, D** & **E**). Among these were further examples of Cordoned Urns, as well as simple bucket/ tub vessels employed in cremations. As noted in **Chapter 2**, each of these vessel groups encompass a spectrum of variation. In the case of Beakers, the spectrum is more limited, encompassing a range of sinuous/ low-carinated vessels, whilst Food Vessels encompass a range of different forms.

Existing terminology is retained where appropriate to describe broad groups of forms. The Beaker forms outlined here principally draw on Needham's typology (2005). Additions suggested for Scotland by Curtis and Wilkin (2012, 2016, see also Wilkin 2010c) are included (see **Section 3.2.3**, Fig. 3.7). Recent reviews of Food Vessels by Brindley (2007) and Wilkin (2013) are also drawn upon. A brief outline of the development and position of Grooved Ware in regional sequences is given in **Chapter 5**. The overlap and relationship of Grooved Ware

[2] *This absence was noted by Longworth (1984: 81) who recorded two examples from Auldearn, Nairn and Loth, Sutherland. The former is likely a Food Vessel and is too fragmentary for reconstruction. The example from Loth is interpreted in this thesis as a Food Vessel Urn (**Section 8.3.3**)*

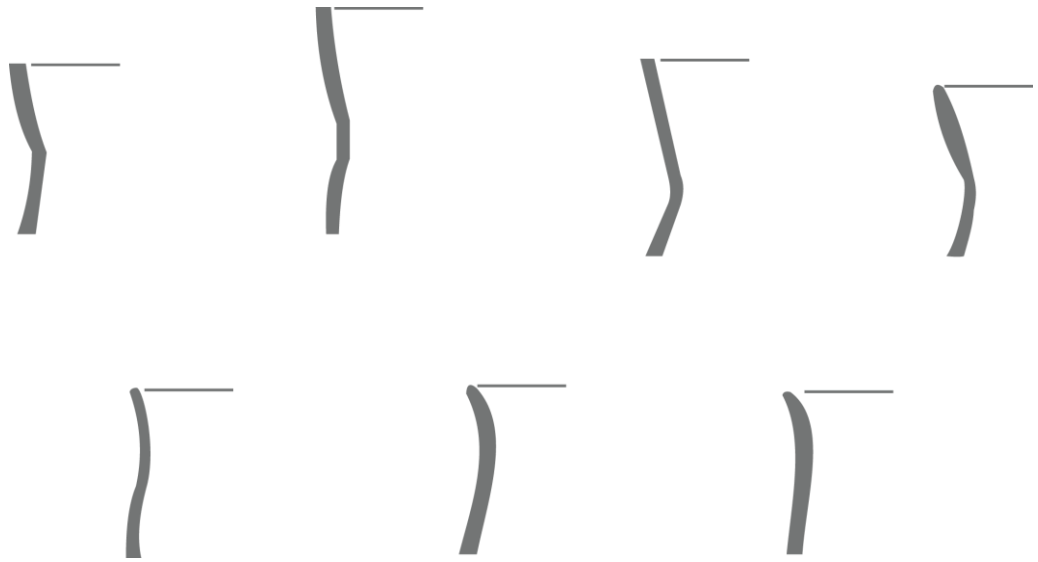


Figure 4.15: *Angled and sinuous necks associated with Beakers*

to the types defined here will be examined throughout the course of this thesis. In addition to the primary form groups, a variety of regional forms was identified. Often these share elements in common with each of the main groups but diverge in many ways. As seen in **Section 2.5**, these include domestic vessels, which encompass a range of forms and sizes. A suite of these were recorded in Shetland where it was necessary to devise a series of different forms groups (Table 6.7). These are discussed in **Chapter 6**. Each parent group encompasses a series of nodal forms, reflecting the most common forms from within the study area (Tables 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3). The forms defined here are not intended as empirical categories but provide the basis for the construction of regional typologies in which the emergence and stabilisation of different categories of pottery can be articulated. In the following section, I will outline the principal nodal forms for each of the main form groups, building further on the brief outlines given in **Chapter 2**.

4.3.2 Beakers

The term 'Beaker' in this thesis denotes a range of sinuous/ low-carinated forms (Table 4.1). Within this broad definition are a range of variations, created through the manipulation of various elements. These include differences in the position and nature of the belly, ranging from low carinated to high rounded bellies (Figs 4.16 & 4.18). The angle and relationship of the neck to the body can range from carinated well-defined necks to poorly defined sinuous necks (Fig. 4.15). The distinction between these two is often subtle and unclear, suggesting a potentially fluid continuum between the two types. Whilst Beakers are typically viewed as fine

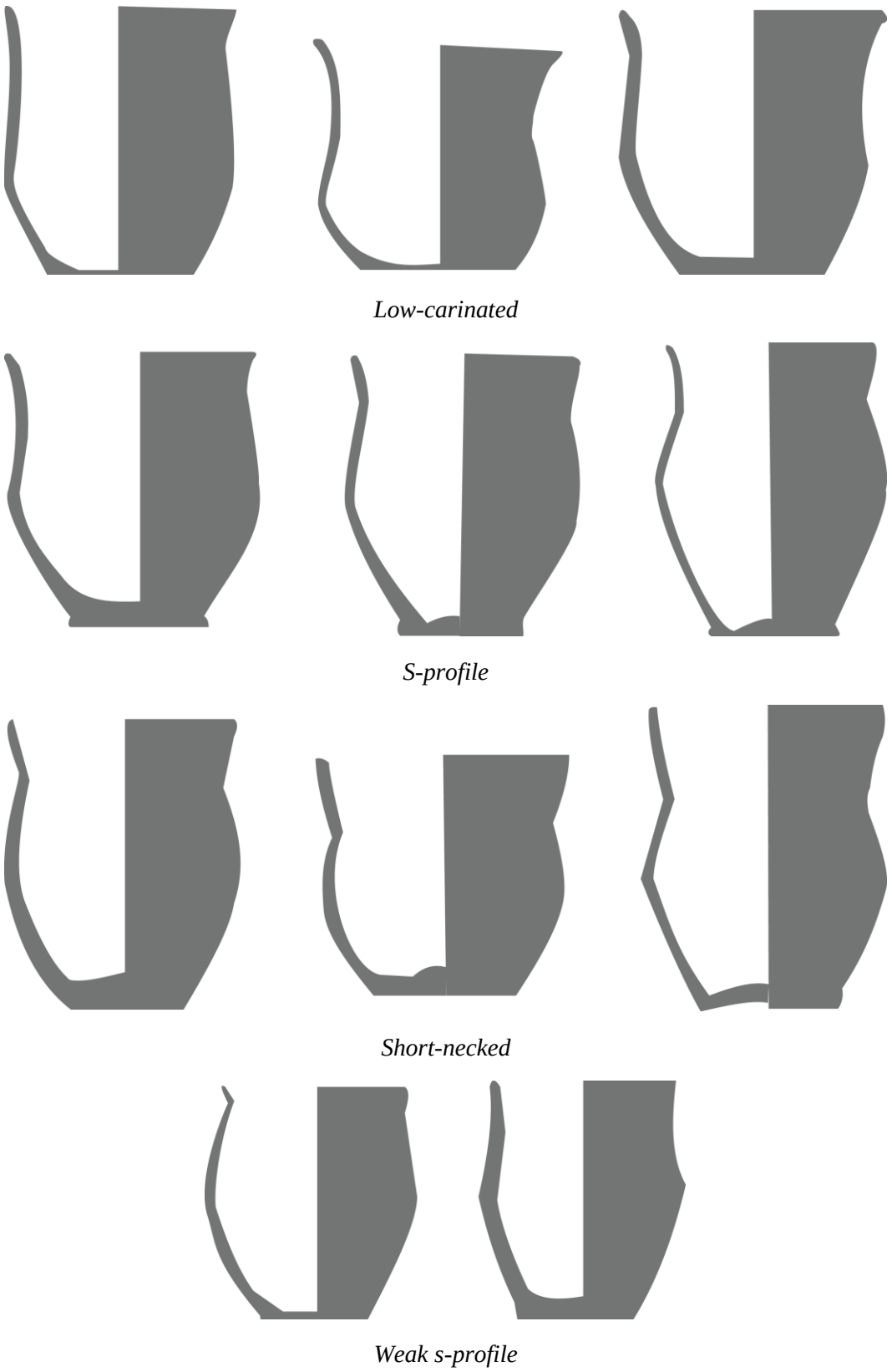


Figure 4.16: *Principal Beaker forms employed in this thesis*

wares, a spectrum of fabrics has been documented including coarse examples (Boast 1995: 71) (**Section 2.5.2**). Vessels are often decorated in zones, all-over schemes or are undecorated. Decoration can extend onto the inner lip of the rim. Common motifs include simple straight lines (incised or impressed), complex geometric patterns often arranged into zones. Decoration is carried out using a variety of techniques including impression (*e.g.* cord, comb, shell) and incision. Over time, the range and form of decoration increases, with varied schemes appearing (Needham 2005; see **Section 2.3**). This further emphasises the need to examine patterns of decoration at a regional level and relationships between different ceramic types. The choice of motifs and techniques can, as highlighted in **Section 2.3**, overlap with twisted cord occurring on Grooved Ware and Beakers.

Low-carinated

These encompass Beakers with a low-angled carination, often with angular profiles (Figs. 2.2 & 4.16). As with other Beakers, there is a degree of variation in the form with tall high-carinated examples, mid–carinated vessels and squat, low-carinated examples (Fig 4.16) (Needham 2005: 183-8). There is a subtle difference between low-carinated and low-bellied

Form	Key features	
Low-carinated (LC)	• Low-angled carination • Range from squat to tall examples • Simple or pointed rims • Sub-rim cordons are noted	Fig. 4.16
S-Profile (SP) / Weak S-Profile (WSP)	• Sinuous to weak profiles • Simple or bevelled rims	Fig. 4.16
Short-necked (SN)	• Vessels have sinuous/ globular profiles. Carinations can be present • Defined necks • Rims simple, rounded or flattened bevelled	Fig. 4.16
Long-necked (LN)	• Necks extended >35% of total height • Often tall and narrow, bellies rounded or carinated	Fig. 4.18
Cupped-necked (CN)	• Cupped rounded neck • Cup can range from well-defined to poor	Fig. 4.18

Table 4.1: *Summary of principal Beaker forms employed in this thesis*

s-profile Beakers, implying a degree of overlap between the two form groups (*ibid.*). Rims are typically simple rounded or pointed, often everted but straight examples are known. Sub-rim cordons, comprising a raised rib just below the rim, are frequently noted on low-carinated Beakers.

S-Profile

Vessel profiles vary from strongly accentuated with a clear s-profile, to weaker, non-accentuated examples where the s-shape is poorly defined (Fig. 4.16). In some cases, the profile is elongate, creating a narrow, weak s-profile vessel. The Beakers from Shoebury, Essex provide a good example of the spectrum of s-profile Beakers, with a strongly defined vessel and several weaker examples (Clarke, D.L. 1970: 325) (Fig. 4.17). Among these weaker examples are vessels that could be described as globular jars. These have been recorded from domestic contexts including Northton (Gibson, A. 2006: 127) (Fig. 2.31) (see **Section 2.5.2**). As with the preceding forms, rims are simple, although beveled rims are recorded. The bevel tends to be shallow and, in some cases, vessels sport an external bevel.

Weak s-profile

These vessels are ambiguous and, in some cases, can be classed as simple vases rather than sinuous vessels. A similar range of weakly defined vessels can be detected among u-shaped

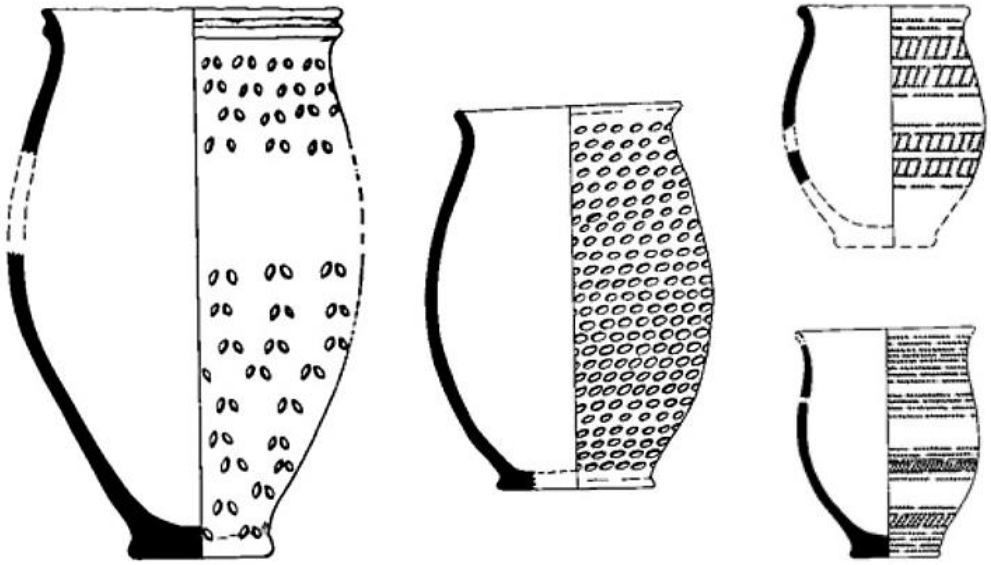
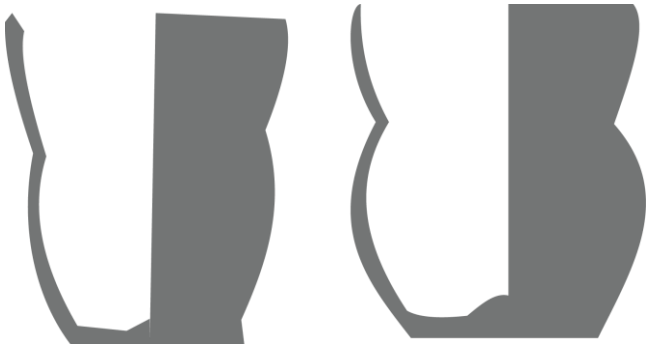


Figure 4.17: *S-profile vessels from Shoebury, Essex (Clarke, D.L. 1970: 325) (not to scale)*

Long-necked



Cupped-necked

Figure 4.18: *Principal Beaker forms employed in this thesis, long necked and cupped necked Beakers*

vases associated with Food Vessels (Fig.4.22). Rims are typically simple rounded and everted.

Short-necked

In contrast to s-profile forms, short-necked Beakers have defined necks, typically at a marked angle between the body and neck (Needham 2005: 191) (Figs. 4.15 & 4.16). The distinction can be subtle, blurring the difference between the two forms. Necks typically form 35% or less of the vessel height (Needham 2005:191). Bodies can be rounded or carinated, whilst rims are simple, often rounded or flattened beveled rims are known.

Long-necked

Long-necked Beakers are outwardly like the short-necked category, but sport extended necks (Fig. 4.18). Vessels are tall and narrow, with the neck depth > 35% the total height

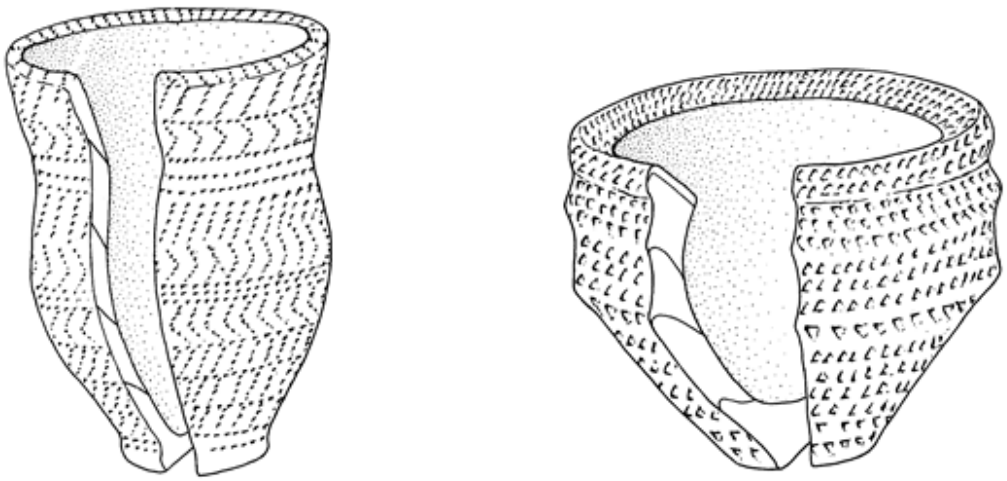


Figure 4.19: *Joins and cross section of Beaker and Food Vessel (Clarke, D.V. et al. 1985: fig 5.31)*

(RDN > 40) (Wilkin 2011b: 30; Needham 2005: 195). As with short-necked and s-profile Beakers, bellies are rounded or carinated. In some cases, the extension of the neck takes on a collar-like appearance.

Cupped-necked

Whilst aping the forms of s-profile and short-necked Beakers, these diverge like long-necked Beakers in the form of the neck and rim. Rims are typically rounded with a cup-like shape, akin to those seen among Clarke's Nodal form VI, VIII (1970: 423). The cup-like element can range from well to poorly defined (Fig. 4.18).

4.3.3 Food Vessels: Vases

Food Vessels encompass a range of forms including bowls and vases (Figs 2.8 & 2.9, Table 4.2). There exists a grey area between bowls and vases, with a variety of tall (heights > rim diameters) and squat vessels (heights < rim diameters) (Burgess 1980a: 86). For the purposes of this thesis bowls are defined as rounded-profiled vessels. These are predominantly bowls of Irish influence, alongside those Burgess defined as 'globular bowls' (Fig. 2.9). Angular shouldered forms, regardless of height to rim ratios have been assigned to the vase category. Aspects of size are examined further on a regional basis. The classification

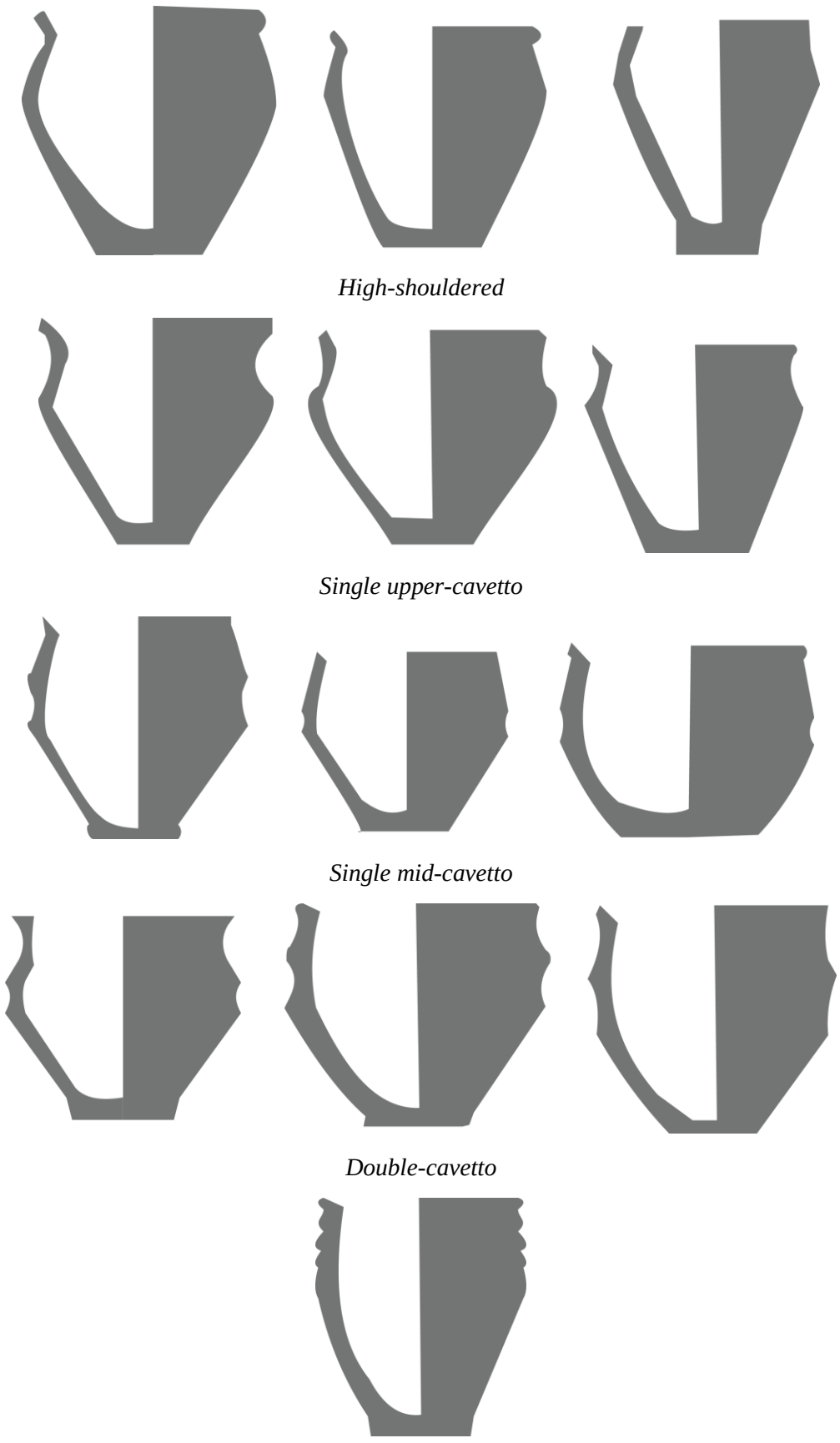


Figure 4.20: *Principal Food Vessel forms employed in this thesis*

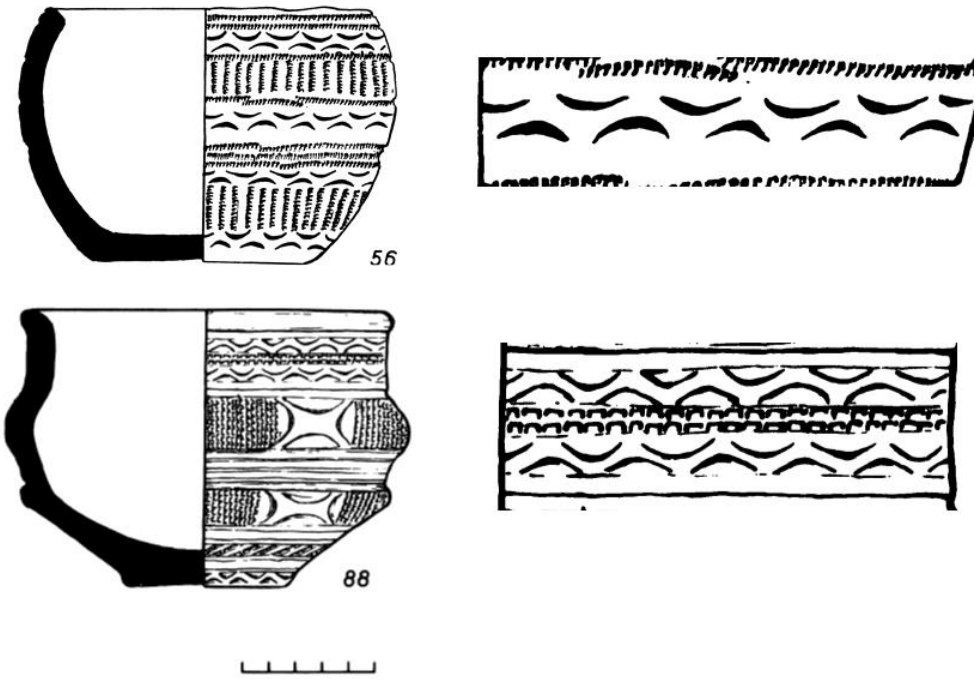


Figure 4.21: *False relief on Irish bowls*

Key: ***1.*** *Ballysadare* ***2.*** *Rush, Co. Dublin (after Ó Ríordáin & Waddell 1993: 170 (no. 56), 175 (no. 88)*

of these vessels eschews the traditional approach of bipartite or tripartite in favor of simpler form-based divisions, which facilitate the construction of regional definitions.

The term 'Food Vessel Vase' is employed here to denote an array of shouldered and non-shouldered forms. Food Vessels usually sport rounded to sharp shoulders at the mid or high point of the vessel. Further distinctions can be made in the form of the lower body, with rounded, straight, concave or convex profiles (Wilkin 2013: 88) (Fig. 4.21). In several cases, these are coupled with single or multiple cavetto zones, which form a key element in the definition of shouldered vases. These features can be related to choices made during the construction process. Cavetto zones are created by "*under- and overlapping coil rings that end with diagonal, inward-sloping angles*" (Wilkin 2013: 74) (Fig. 4.19). Vessels with cavetto zones tend to be thicker, which allows the creation of such features without threatening the stability of the vessel wall (G. Taylor pers. comm.). Cavetto zones can show considerable variation from vessel to vessel and can provide one of the key variables employed by potters to create distinct forms. As highlighted in **Section 2.3**, differences in cavetto zones can be employed to distinguish British and Irish vases. Alongside cavetto zones, Food Vessels can

Form	Key features	
High-shouldered (HS)	• Shoulders roughly $^2/_3$ of way up the body • Lack cavetto zones/ shoulder grooves • Range of rims including bevelled and simple types • Tall versions over 200mm are known	Fig. 4.20
Single upper-cavetto (SCU)	• Single, often broad, cavetto zone above shoulder • Necks typically concave – often little distinction between neck and rim • Shoulders typically at midpoint of vessel • Rims typically everted	Fig. 4.20
Single mid-cavetto (SCM)	• Cavetto zone at midpoint of vessel • Area above cavetto zone typically angled	Fig. 4.20
Double-cavetto (DC)	• Pair of cavetto zones above shoulder • Zones further defined through carinations or cordons • Broad cavetto zones, can be infilled with lugs • Rims range from simple to bevelled	Fig. 4.20
Ridged (R)	• Multiple ridges either restricted to above the shoulder, or extending across the whole body	Fig. 4.20
Grooved-shoulder (GS)	• Outwardly like cavetto forms, but sport deeply incised grooves rather than cavetto zones	Fig. 4.22
Simple (S)	• Rounded lower profiles – vessels tend to be u-shaped • Vessels can show overlap with bucket/ tub forms	Fig. 4.22

Table 4.2: *Summary of principal Food Vessel vase classifications employed in this thesis*

sport distinct grooves. These are differentiated from cavetto zones in terms of their width and general profile.

Other recurrent features include the presence of deeply beveled rims (Fig. 4.11), which are often decorated. Decoration can be arranged into geometric schemes, extending across the whole of the body, overlapping with Beakers. Further overlap occurs in the range of decorative techniques employed, with impressed decoration, including twisted cord. Other techniques

include the use of whipped cord maggots (Fig. 4.11.2) and false relief. False relief involves the impressing of alternating and opposing shapes (triangles are common, alongside paired fingernail impressions) into clay, producing a raised zig-zag (Gibson, A. & Woods 1990: 147) (Fig. 4.21). False relief is prevalent among Irish Bowls and examples from Western Scotland (Wilkin 2013: 60), further highlighting the importance of connections across the Irish sea during the period.

High-shouldered

High-shouldered Food Vessels have shoulders positioned roughly $^{2}/_{3}$ of the way up the body, giving the vessel a roughly kite-shaped profile (Fig 4.20). These forms are widely recorded among Scottish Food Vessels, including examples from Ardnave (Fig. 2.35). Vessels typically lack cavetto zones or grooves. There is a high degree of variation in the rim and neck, including simple forms without developed rims, presenting a collar like appearance, to more developed types such as those with extended necks from Kilellan Farm (Cowie, R. 2005) (Fig. 2.37) and Irish vases (Brindley 2007: Chp. 12; Ó Ríordáin & Waddell 1993: Chp. 3) (Figs. 2.9 & 2.10). Between these two ends of the spectrum are vessels with simple shallow or deep beveled rims. In other cases, rims can be simple rounded or flattened. Included within this broad category are tall, high-shouldered forms, typically over 200mm tall[3]. Unlike their shorter cousins, a single narrow or broad cavetto zone can be present.

Single upper-cavetto

Single upper-cavetto vessels sport a single cavetto zone above the shoulder, often quite broad, creating a convex neck ending in a slightly everted rim (Fig. 4.20). There is usually little to no distinction between the neck and the rim, or between the between the neck and the cavetto

Figure 4.22: *Principal Food Vessel forms employed in this thesis; Simple Food Vessels*

[3] *This group overlaps with Cowies 'Food Vessel' urns (1978) (see* ***Section 2.4****)*

zone, with a broad zone extending from the shoulder to the rim. These forms can overlap in part with high-shouldered vases creating a degree of ambiguity. Shoulders are typically at the mid-point of the vessel, but in some the shoulder can occur slightly higher up. Rims are typically everted with a gentle curving neck and an internal bevel.

Single mid-cavetto

In contrast to the previous group, the cavetto zone is usually placed at the midpoint of the vessel above the shoulder (Fig. 4.20). The area above this is usually angled, creating a clear distinction between the cavetto, upper body and neck. These can, in cases, be difficult to discern from double-cavetto zones, especially where the upper part is slightly curved.

Double-cavetto

As the name implies, these Food Vessels sport two cavetto zones, typically placed above the shoulder (Fig. 4.20). These zones can be further elaborated using carinations or cordons. These cavettos tend to comprise a narrow and broad zone, which can be decorated with applied lugs. Within this, there is considerable variety with differing emphasis placed on select components, with vessels ranging from those with vase like shapes to more rounded bowl like shapes. Rims range from simple to beveled.

Ridged

Ridged vessels are decorated with multiple ridges. Whilst typically placed above the shoulder, these can in some cases extend across the whole of the body (Fig. 4.20). Ridged vessels can be created either through molding, raising the surfaces of the vessel or, alternatively, using multiple grooves.

Grooved-shoulder

Grooved-shoulder vessels are outwardly like cavetto forms, but with deeply incised grooves with or without lugs. This is a decorative technique rather than a constructional one as in the case of cavetto zones, which are created through the overlapping of coils (*cf.* Wilkin 2013: 92; see also Sheridan 1993). Grooves do not have a concave appearance like the waisting on waisted bowls.

Waisted

Globular

Figure 4.23: *Globular and waisted squat Food Vessel Bowls*

Form	Key features	
Simple globular (SG)	• Globular bowls with rounded profiles • Bases typically pedestalled • Simple rims common, bevelled rims are known • Where rim is bevelled this is typically decorated	*Fig. 4.23*
Squat waisted/ grooved (SWG)	• Single, often broad, cavetto zone above shoulder • Necks typically concave – often little distinction between neck and rim • Shoulders typically at midpoint of vessel • Rims typically everted	*Fig. 4.23*

Table 4.3: *Summary of principal Food Vessel bowl classifications employed in this thesis*

Simple

These depart from the shouldered profile of the other Food Vessel forms. Instead, vessels have rounded lower profiles, but the degree of roundness can vary. Profiles tend to be u-shaped and usually of squat proportions, although taller examples are known (Fig. 4.22). The latter can overlap with globular Food Vessel bowls. Vessels of this type were included by Burgess as part of his Irish-Scottish Rounded Vases, and Bucket Shape (1980a: 90) (Fig. 2.9), but more likely represent a range of local types (Brindley 2007: 302).

4.3.4 Food Vessels: Bowls

Bowls were rare within the study area, with only two forms defined (Fig. 4.23, Table 4.3). Defined vessels range from simple globular vessels, often with pedestalled bases to grooved simple bowls. Simple globular bowls have been varying attributed to Food Vessels or Beakers. Bowls sport a mixed range of decoration, overlapping closely with other shouldered Food Vessels. A preference for geometric decoration is noted with the exterior of the vessel divided into zones. Motifs often overlap with Beakers, being executed in comb and twisted cord impressions.

Simple globular

Simple globular bowls have rounded profiles. Bases are often pedestalled, whilst rims are often simple, but beveled rims are known. Where the rim is internally beveled, this zone is often decorated.

Squat waisted/ grooved

The form varies from rounded to angular with some examples sporting more angular profiles (Figs. 4.21 & 2.7). The waist can range from a simple narrow median groove, typically square in profile to a broader concave zone giving the vessel a tripartite form (Gibson, A. & Woods 1990 163). Some examples, as at Luce Sands, can sport multiple narrow grooves, creating a ridged-like appearance (Simpson, D. 1965: fig 8.62).

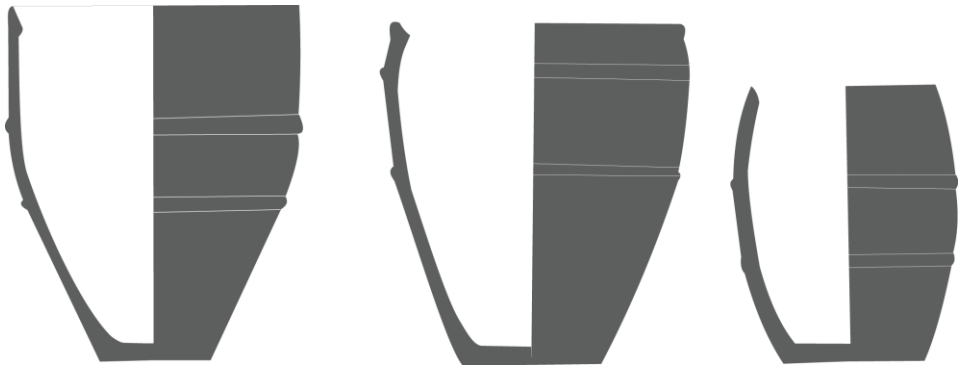


Figure 4.24: *Examples of Cordoned Urn forms*

Figure 4.25: *Examples of bucket /tub vessels*

4.3.5 Cordoned Urns

Cordoned Urns comprise bucket/ tub vessels, decorated with applied or pinched up cordons. Forms range from elongate bucket/ tub to barrel like shapes (Fig.4.25). Barrel forms tend to be rarer, with simple bipartite forms preferred (Waddell 1995: 116). Vessels are often undecorated, but examples with incised decoration were recorded from the study area and other parts of Scotland (Fig. 2.17). Cordons typically range from one to four. In some cases, these are pinched up from the surface, whilst others are applied, masking coil joins (Waddell 1995:116). Pseudo cordons can be formed using deep grooves, creating the impression of raised areas (*ibid.*).

4.3.6 Bucket/ tub vessels

This category encompasses a series of ubiquitous forms that lack the diagnostic elements of the previous groups, notably defined shoulders/ carinations. Instead, these represent a series of generic forms found widely during the 3rd millennium, including those grouped under the label of 'flat rim ware' (Fig. 2.11) (**Section 2.3**). Forms range from shallow vessels with wide

diameters, to tall narrow vessels with angled or rounded barrel like shapes (Fig. 4.25). Vessels are typically undecorated but incised and impressed decoration can be found on several examples (*e.g.* Morrison 1968: 84). These forms are found in a range of contexts, including domestic sites. Due to the ubiquitous nature of these forms it was decided to not sub-divide these further. These vessels are further critiqued throughout the course of the regional studies.

4.4 Discussion

This chapter has examined the key physical elements of pottery, highlighting the modular nature of vessel construction. The review has built further upon the key points raised in **Chapter 3**, further stressing the relational nature of pot making. To provide parameters for the project and avoid a slide into relativism, a series of forms were defined, drawing on existing typological schema. The nodal forms represent categories of best fit, providing points of reference. They are not intended as empirical categories. As noted in **Chapter 3**, there is a need for simple structures that provide a basis for regional analyses. Much of the difference between these forms stems from choices made by the potter, and these can in turn be related to the wider assemblage, including the intended function of the vessel, *i.e.* a cooking pot or a funerary vessel. Importantly, by considering the variables involved in production, it is clear that not all variation in pots can be ascribed to larger processes. Instead variation can be related to the skill level of the potter, the choices made, and the materials used to name a few (Taylor, G. 2013: 125; Law, R. 2008: 74; van der Leeuw 2008). Compared to Food Vessels, the production of Beakers involves a range of different choices and processes. The process of construction is thus a highly individual experience, drawing on the wider assemblage in which the potter operates. This can include citation of past forms and inherited knowledge. The overall form of the pot can be affected by the addition or swapping out of one element in favour of another. As will be discussed later, this can include the intermixing of elements of one type with another, creating forms with a mix of attributes.

In the following chapter, each of the regions will be studied in turn, developing a series of regional typologies. In these typologies, alongside considerations of form and decoration, reviews of production and contexts of use will be outlined. By considering these contextual aspects, variations in form and decoration can be related to the wider assemblage in which vessels were associated.

PART II:

REGIONAL STUDIES

CHAPTER FIVE
CERAMICS AND 'SOCIAL WORLDS' 3000-2500BC

5.1 Introduction

Before evaluating the ceramic material from the later 3rd millennium it is important to consider the context in which these changes took place. As highlighted in **Chapter 1** this allows for a fuller understanding not only of the change in ceramic types over time but also the contexts in which vessels were employed. In ceramic terms, this period is defined by Grooved Ware and its connection to large-scale gatherings and new forms of monumentality (Sheridan 2004b; Thomas, J, 2010; Harris 2013; see also **Chapter 2**). The emergence and spread of Grooved Ware has often been linked to wider social changes during the period (Thomas, J. 2010; Sheridan 2004b; Wainwright, G. & Longworth 1971; Harris 2013).

Present definitions of Grooved Ware suffer from problems of semantics and chronology (MacSween 2007a: 370-4, 2016: 248-52; Garwood 1999; Sheridan 2003b). Importantly, current definitions mask the high degree of variability found among Grooved Ware vessels from across Britain and Ireland (*cf.* papers in Cleal & MacSween 1999). This is reinforced by a tendency to treat Grooved Ware as a 'package' akin to Beakers (*e.g.* Sheridan 2004b). A full critique of these problems lies beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, this review will outline key trends and the role and position of ceramics in wider processes of the earlier 3rd millennium. These are set out on a regional basis, starting with the Orkney Isles. The conclusion of this chapter draws this material together, highlighting key elements of the regions under study.

5.2 The Orkney Isles

5.2.1 'Big Houses'

The late 4th and early 3rd millennium BC in Orkney is defined by a suite of distinct artefact types, including highly decorated Grooved Ware (Fig. 5.15). The emergence and use of Grooved Ware intersects with wider changes in settlement architecture and spatial

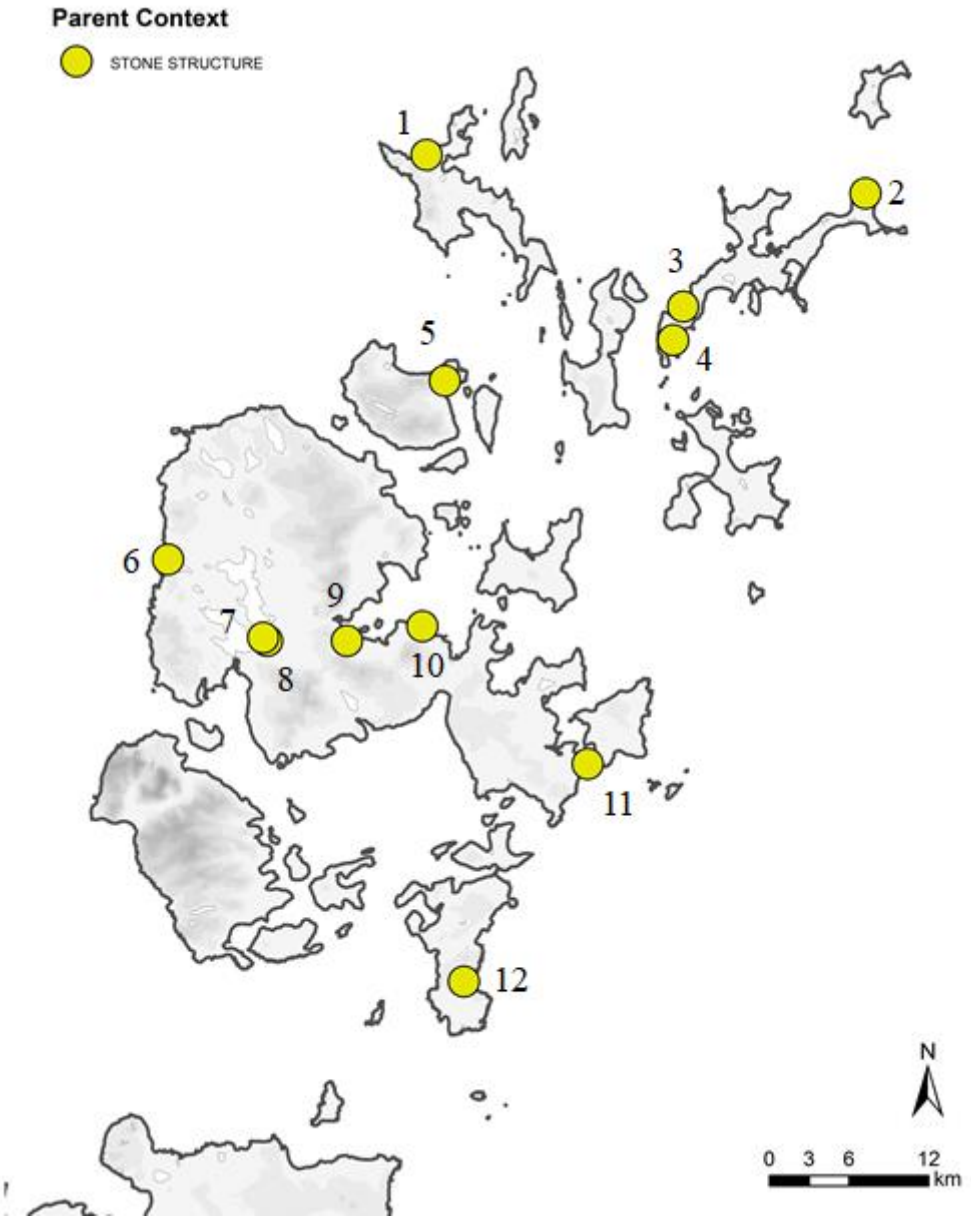


Figure 5.1: *Map of key domestic sites discussed in text by site type*

Key: ***1.*** *Links of Noltland (ORK10), Westray* ***2.*** *Tofts Ness (ORK19), Sanday 3****.*** *Pool, Sanday* ***4.*** *Stove Bay, Sanday* ***5.*** *Rinyo (ORK16), Rousay 6****.*** *Skara Brae, Mainland 7****.*** *Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Mainland,* ***8.*** *Barnhouse, Mainland,* ***9.*** *Stonehall, Mainland,* ***10.*** *Crossiecrown (ORK6), Mainland,* ***11.*** *Dingieshowe, Mainland,* ***12.*** *The Cairns, South Ronaldsay (possible example, M. Carruthers pers comm)*

arrangement (*e.g.* Bayliss *et al.* 2017). Notable among the latter are a series of large nucleated sites, comprising several structures (*cf.* Richards, C. & Jones, R. 2016). Known nucleated sites include Skara Brae, Sandwick (Childe 1931; Clarke, D.V. 1976), the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11) (Towers *et al.* 2015) and Barnhouse (Richards, C. 2005a) (Fig. 5.2). Barnhouse lies

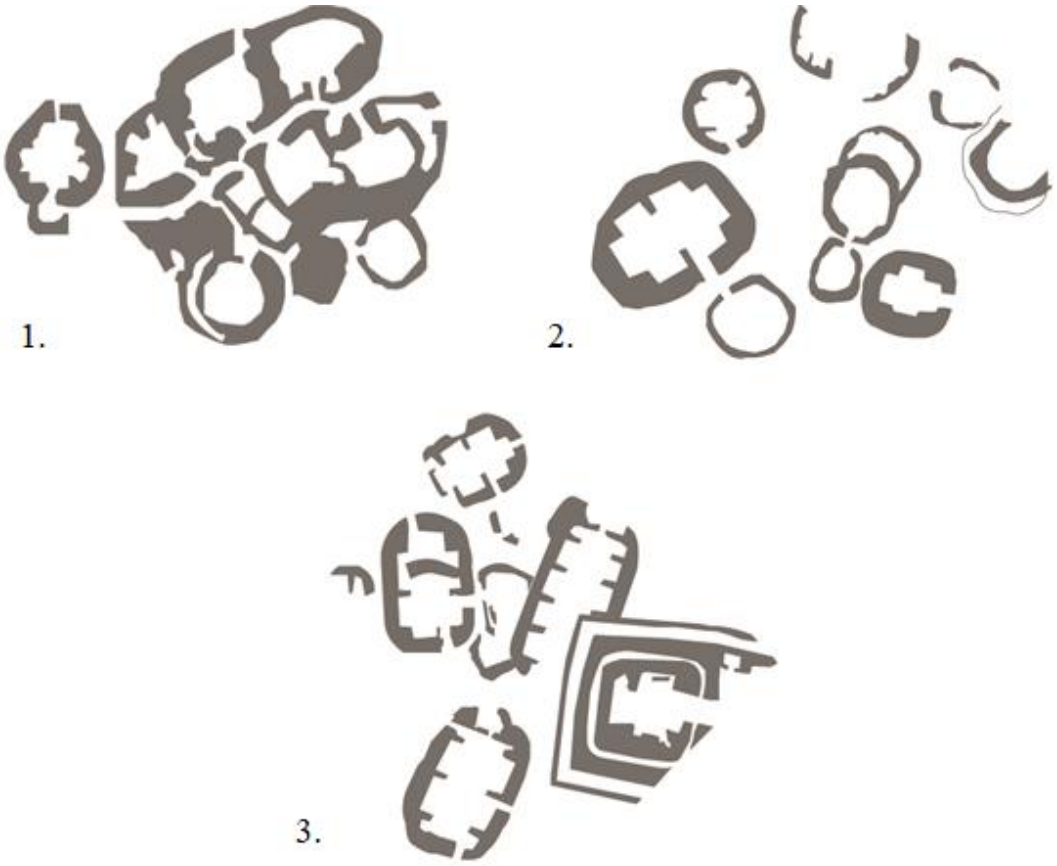


Figure 5.2: *Simplified plans of nucleated sites from Orkney:*

Key: ***1.*** *Skara Brae, Mainland (after Childe 1931),* ***2.*** *Barnhouse, Mainland (after Richards, C. 2005a),* ***3.*** *Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Mainland (after Card et al. 2011) (not to scale)*

early in this group of nucleated sites, the earliest phases dating to 3440–3040 cal BC (Schulting *et al.* 2010: 35). The site comprises a series of structures divided into two zones orientated around a central open space (Jones, A & Richards, C. 2005: 55). This spatial division was seemingly reinforced using differently tempered groups of pottery at the inner and outer edge of the site (*ibid.*).

An important aspect of these sites is their dynamic patterns of usage with multiple phases of construction and demolition (Richards, C. 2004: 111, Richards, C. *et al.* 2016a: 232-3), as encapsulated in the numerous structures at the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11) (Towers *et al.* 2015; Card & Thomas, A. 2012: 115-118) (Fig.5.2, see Figs 5.3 & 5.4). Over the course of its use these structures saw numerous phases and modifications (Card *et al.* 2017). Str. 1 originally around 15m long was reduced in size around a century later, whilst other buildings were dismantled and replaced over time (see Card *et al.* 2016) (Fig 5.3). This pattern of expansion

and contraction is observed at other Orcadian sites (Bayliss *et al.* 2017)[1]. At Barnhouse, present dating suggests an end date *c.*2900 cal BC or *c.* 2750 cal BC (Ashmore 2005a: 388; Richards, C. *et al.* 2016b: 23). The final phase is dominated by Str. 8, a large cruciform shaped structure (Hill & Richards, C. 2005: 188). Comparable large structures have been recorded at Stonehall Farm (Str. 1), Mainland (Richards, C. *et al.* 2016c), Pool (Str. 8), Sanday (Hunter, J. 2007) and Str. 10 at the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11) (Towers *et al.* 2015; Card

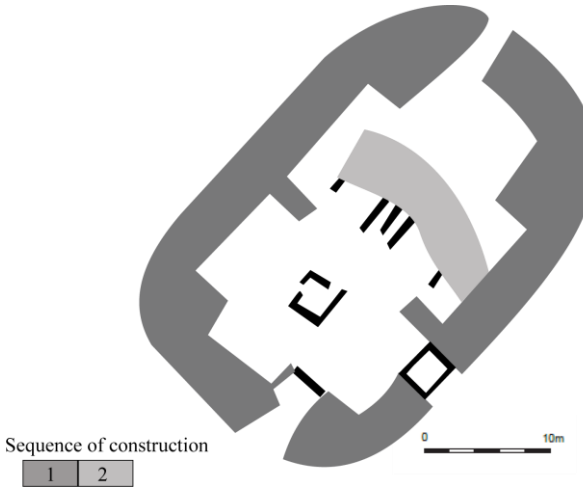


Figure 5.3: *Simplified plan of Str1.Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Mainland (after Card et al. 2011; Figure 3)*

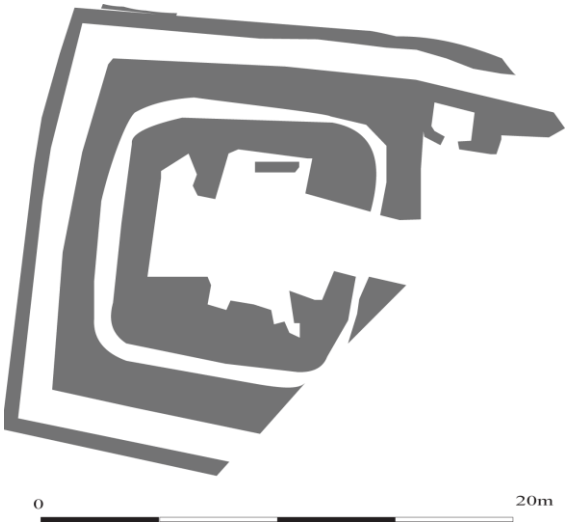


Figure 5.4: *Simplified plan of Str. 10 Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Mainland (after Card et al. 2011: Figure 3)*

[1] *Recent Bayesian modelling from sites across the archipelago underscore the potential dynamism of settlement patterns during the period. Sites range from long term to short term occupation (see Bayliss et al. 2017)*

Figure 5.5: *Simplified plans of double houses at:*

Key: ***1.*** *Links of Noltland, Westray (ORK10),* ***2.*** *Skara Brae, Mainland* ***3.*** *Skaill, Mainland (after Downes & Thomas, A. 2013: Figure 4.3) (not to scale)*

et al. 2017). Str. 10 at the Ness of Brodgar comprises a double-walled structure with a cruciform-shaped inner space and central hearth (Fig 5.4). This structure was rebuilt around 2800 BC due to structural instability, continuing in use until *c.* 2400-2200 BC (Towers *et al.* 2015: 22-3). A hall-like structure has been proposed at the Stones of Stenness, Mainland, although the evidence is ambiguous, comprising a central hearth and remnants of walling (Ritchie, J.N.G 1976; Richards, C. 2013: 70). These large structures acted as focal points for gatherings, consumptive events and various structured deposits[2] (Richards, C. *et al.* 2016a).

Given their dynamic *"life histories"*, these structures could have encompassed a range of uses, their significance and role changing over time (Thomas, J. 2007: 260-1; Richards, C. *et al.* 2016a; see also Holtorf 2000-8). This is underscored by the continued importance of these locations following their initial use. The hearth in Structure 1 at Stonehall Farm was replaced with a stone cist, containing decayed bone dated to *c.* 3370-2930 cal BC (Richards, C. *et al.* 2016c: 143; Griffiths 2016: 261) (**Section 5.2.2**). At Skara Brae and Barnhouse comparable deposits of bones and cists have been recorded (Richards, C. *et al.* 2016c: 143; Bryce 1931: 185-6; see also Shepherd, A. 2016). A funerary function has also been suggested for the final phases of Str. 8 at Pool (Hunter, J. 2007: 518). In contrast at Stenness the probable structure appears to have been succeeded by a stone circle, with a central hearth (Challands *et al.* 2005a: 222) (**Section 5.2.3**).

[2] *Recent discussions have interpreted these twin processes of nucleation and the emergence of large domestic dwellings in the context of house societies as originally outlined by Levi Strauss (1982). Cf. Richards, C. et al. 2016c for an overview of these processes*

Alongside these large structures, double or paired houses, dating from the late 3rd to 2nd millennium, are found across the Orkney Isles (Richards, C. *et al.* 2016a: 245; Downes & Thomas, A. 2011)[3]. These typically comprise a pair of sub-oval structures linked together with their entrances facing each other (Fig. 5.5). Known examples include Skaill, Mainland (Buteux 1997), Spurdagrove, Mainland (Øverik 1985: 148), Hut no. 8 Skara Brae, and the Links of Noltland, Westray (ORK10) (Moore & Wilson 2011: 27) (Fig. 5.3). At Crossiecrown (ORK6), Mainland, the Red (House 1) and Grey (House 2) houses formed a double house for a period (Card *et al.* 2016: 190). Whilst these structures show similarities in their architecture, as with the large domestic structures, caution should be expressed in reifying the double house as an explicit type given its long chronological span (Richards C. *et al.* 2016: 246). The use of categories of structures as explanatory devices is fraught with complications and diminishes the dynamic nature of these structures (Scholma 2010: 30; Thomas, J. 2007:262; Jones. S, & Richards, C. 2005: 197-8). Like pottery or other artefacts these structures have their own materiality and potency, deriving from their engagement with broader processes (Thomas, J. 2007: 262). These structures themselves form part of wider processes and networks. This includes the association of the hall-like structures with feasting paraphernalia and other specialised material forms, and their interconnections with other 'ritual' (including stone circles) and funerary structures.

5.2.2 Depositing the dead

A wide variety of funerary settings were employed during the early 3rd millennium. These include the placement of individuals in stone cists and the internment of multiple individuals in chambered cairns (Figs. 5.6 & 5.8). During the early 3rd millennium chambered cairns are typically cruciform in plan, with a central chamber with additional compartments to the side, accessed via a narrow passage (Fig. 5.6.1)[4]. The overall form of the chamber itself closely overlaps with domestic structures. The use of cruciform chambers succeeds earlier stalled cairns, with a possible overlapping phase of use (Bayliss *et al.* 2017: 1178). Conventionally, chambered cairns and inhumation have dominated discussions of the early 3rd millennium, but several are lacking evidence of human remains or detailed information is absent (*cf.* Crozier *et al.* 2016; Lawrence 2012). In many cases, the human remains are now lost, prohibiting further analysis (*cf.* Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1989). Isbister, South Ronaldsay, and Quanterness, Mainland, have benefited from detailed recording and are two notable exceptions

[3] *Examples of double-houses are also recorded from the Shetland Isles (**Chapter 6**).*
[4] *These have tended to be grouped under the label of 'Maes How type' after the eponymous site at Maes Howe, Mainland*

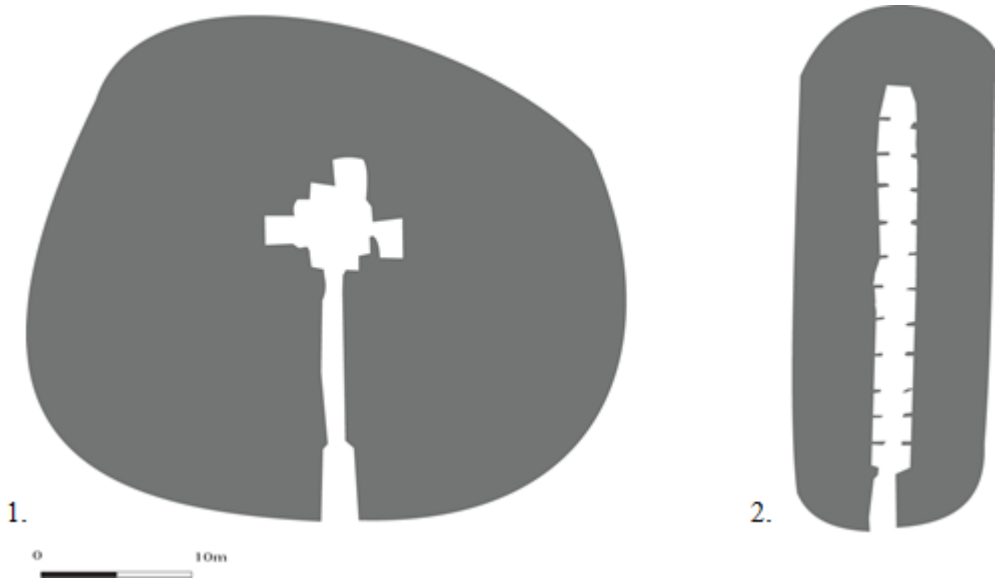


Figure 5.6: *Simplified outlines of chambered cairn and stalled cairn:*

Key: ***1.*** *Chambered cairn, Maes Howe, Mainland,* ***2.*** *Stalled chambered cairn, Midhowe, Rousay*

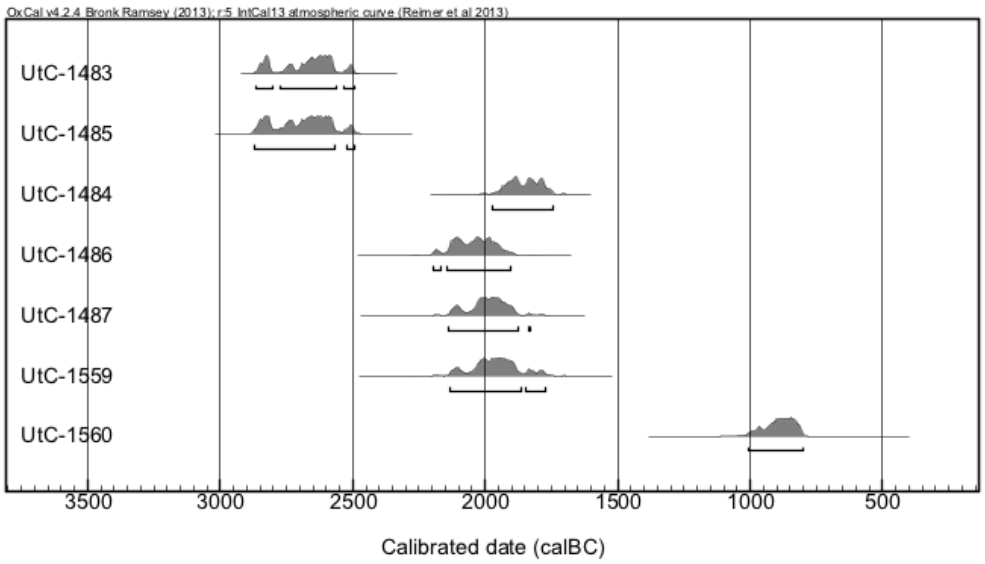


Figure 5.7: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for Sand Fiold (ORK17), Mainland (see* ***App. F2*** *for details)*

to this rule (Crozier *et al.* 2016: 198). In the absence of human remains, alternative functions have been suggested including their use as temples (Barber 2000; *contra.* Lawrence 2012: 491-6). Dated samples of unburnt bone from chambered cairns suggest lengthy periods of use, extending across the 4th to early 2nd millennium BC (Ballin Smith 2014: 129).

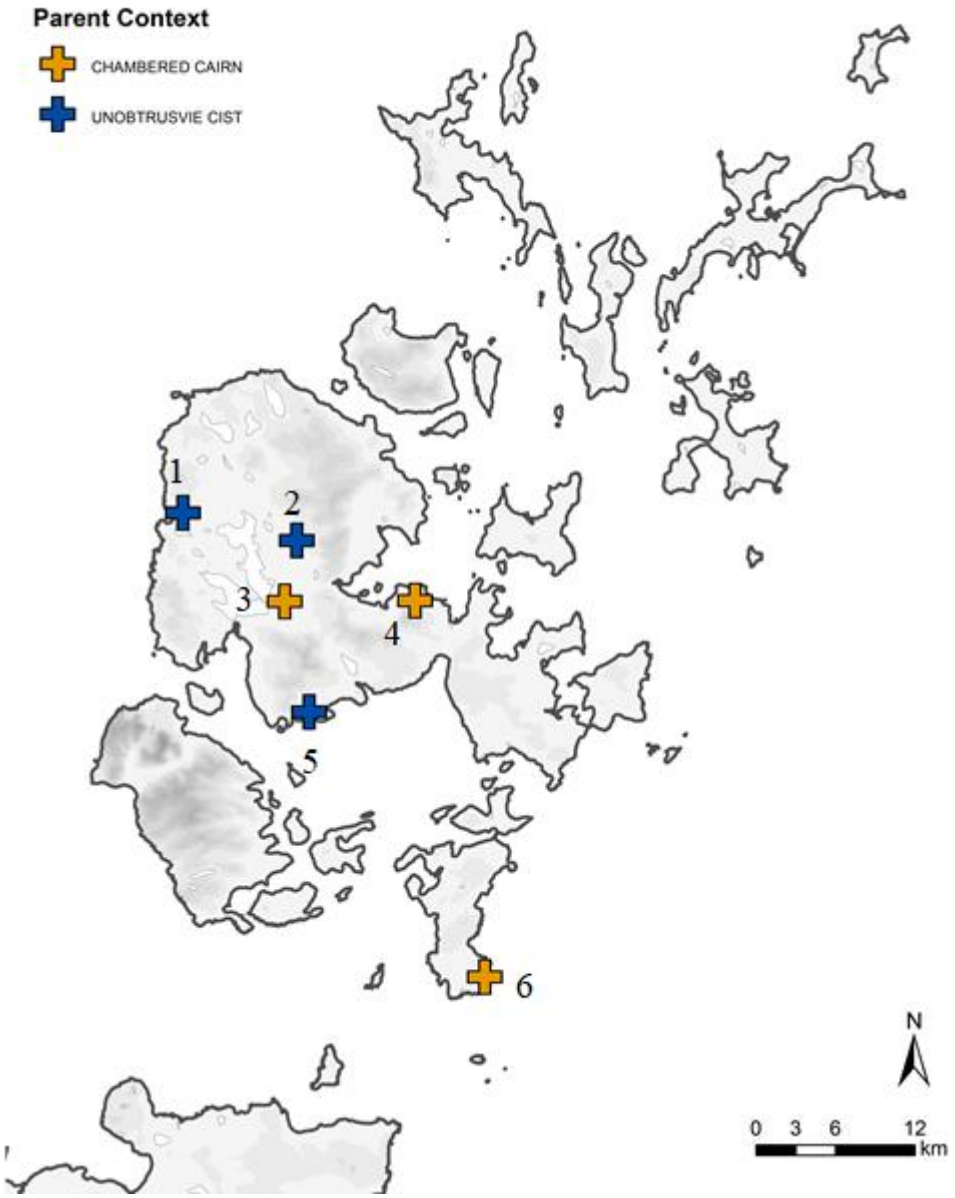


Figure 5.8: *Map of key funerary sites discussed in text:*

Key: ***1.*** *Sand Fiold (ORK17), Mainland* ***2.*** *Howe Farm, Mainland,* ***3.*** *Maes Howe, Mainland,* ***4.*** *Quanterness, Mainland* ***5.*** *Gyre, Mainland* ***6.*** *Isbister, South Ronaldsay*

Alongside chambered cairns, stone-built cists are employed, including small stone boxes in domestic structures as at Stonehall and Skara Brae (Richards, C. *et al*. 2016c: 150). The bone from these features was fragmentary, and it cannot be confidently stated whether they are human or animal. In two cases, cists have been dated to the earlier 3rd millennium, overlapping with the use of chambered cairns. These include the large example from Sand Fiold (ORK17), Mainland, in use from 2880-2490 cal BC (UtC-1485), 2870-2490 cal BC (UtC-1483) (Fig.

5.7) (*cf.* **App. B2**). The second cist at Howe Farm, Mainland, is dated to 3030- 2620 cal BC (Ballin Smith 2014: 129). The cist at Gyre Farm, Orphir, is undated, but based on morphological similarities it could belong to this earlier group of cists (Simpson, D. *et al.* 2007:66). Given the poorly dated nature of cist burials in Orkney it is possible other examples exist. The use of cists in the early 3rd millennium is comparable to examples from the Irish Sea province (Dalland 1999: 407) and mirrors the early cist burials from Shetland (Hedges & Parry 1980) (**Section 5.3.1**). Cists with inhumations and, more commonly, cremations are frequently recorded in the late 3rd to 2nd millennium (Ballin Smith 2014: Table 25, 26). Based on current dating it cannot be stated whether there is direct continuity between these and later cists in Orkney (Dalland 1999: 409; Ballin Smith 2014: 136-42) (see **Section 7.4**)[5].

Past discussions of the treatment of the dead has focused on excarnation and the subsequent deposition of remains (*i.e.* Chesterman 1979), but recent research suggests a more complex picture (Crozier *et al.* 2016; Lawrence 2006, 2012) (Fig. 5.9). Inhumation appears to have formed the primary rite at Quanterness, rather than excarnation as suggested initially by Chesterman (1979: 107; Crozier *et al.* 2016: 208). Unburnt bone has been found in stone boxes including Barnhouse House 2 (Richards, C. 2005b: 140), Skara Brae (Bryce 1931) and Stonehall Farm (Richards, C. *et al.* 2016c: 145). But, as highlighted above, it is unclear if these are human or animal. Burials in Quanterness include inhumations from Pit C, Pit A and Pit B[6] (Renfrew 1979: 58-61), suggesting that the practice of crouched inhumation in the Orkney Isles could have a longer history than previously assumed (Schulting *et al.* 2010: 12; Simpson, D. *et al.* 2007: 65). This includes the deposition of inhumations into cists, as at Gyre Farm and Sand Fiold (ORK17). Further dating of remains is needed to fully understand this sequence.

Regarding ceramics, these appear to have played little role in funerary practices[7], although a sizeable assemblage of Grooved Ware was recovered from Quanterness (Fig. 5.10)[8]. The

[5] Cists with no datable artefacts have been widely found across Orkney. Several of these were recorded by Gough in the 18th century, comprising short-cists and inhumed remains (1786: xii-xii). Near Stromness a crouched inhumation was recorded with the knees drawn up to the chin, echoing the recorded posture of other 3rd millennium burials (ibid., cf. Bloxam unpub for further examples)
[6] The remains from Pit A and B were found in a crouched posture (Renfrew 1979: 59). Recent re-dating of these burials suggests that those from Pit A and C lie early in the overall sequence of deposition. Combined dates for the burial from Pit A suggest a range of 3000–2886 cal BC (Schulting et al. 2010:11).
[7] Whilst the burial from Pit A included a sherd of pottery (SF323) in front of the rib cage the exact degree of association is unclear as is the nature of the pottery (Renfrew 1979: 59).
[8] Pottery was primarily found in stratum 3-4, with joining sherds found in strata 2–5, 3–5 and 1/3/4/5 indicating a high level of post depositional disturbance (Schulting et al. 2010: 9)

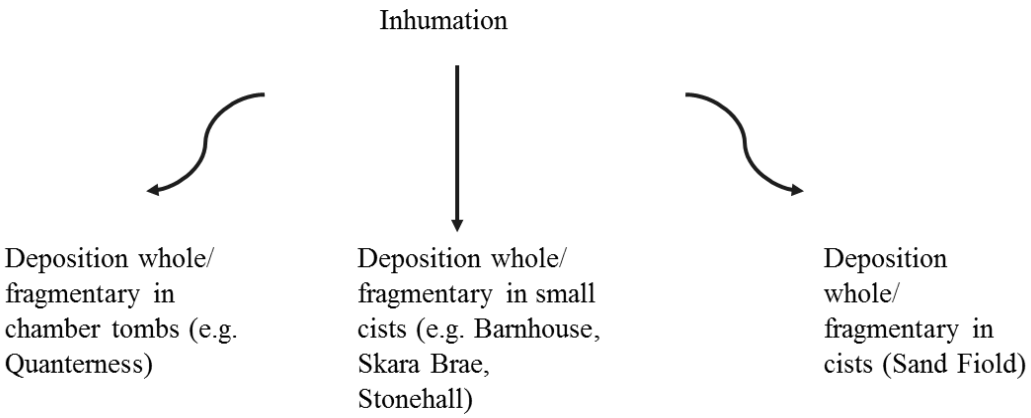


Figure 5.9: *Principal funerary rites of the early 3rd millennium BC in the Orkney Isles*

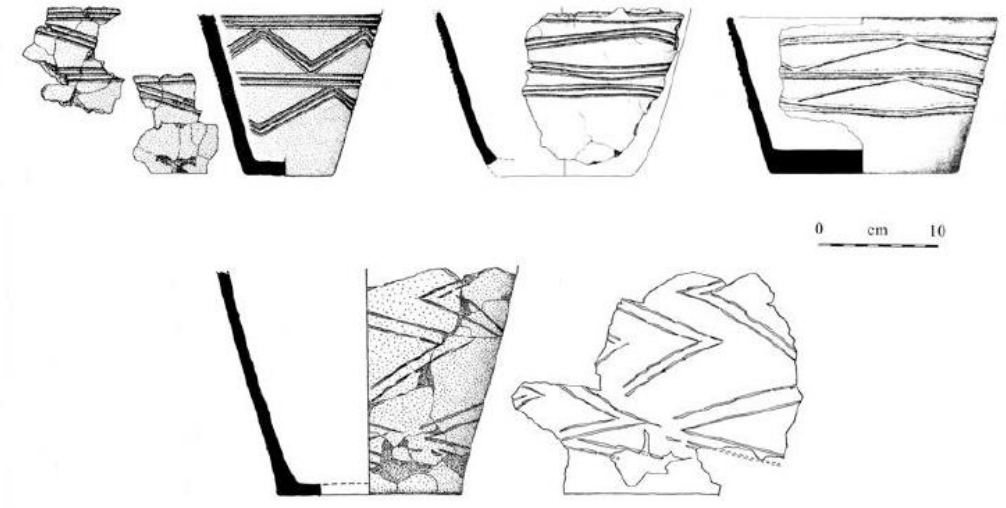


Figure 5.10: *Grooved Ware from Quanterness, Mainland (Renfrew 1979)*

assemblage included burnt and sooted sherds probably used in cooking practices before deposition (Henshall 1979: 77). The possible association of Grooved Ware with funerary feasts echoes the role of earlier Unstan Vessels (see Jones, A. 1999) (**Section 5.2.4**). Sherds of Grooved Ware were recorded from around the chambered cairn at Papa Westray North (ORK13) (Figs. 7.40 & 7.41). These appear to have been associated with midden deposits and could stem from domestic rather than funerary activity (Ritchie, A. 2009: 23).

5.2.3 Stone Circles

Stone circles, comprising a bank and ditch enclosing a set of upright stones, are rare in Orkney. Only two extant examples are known, the Stones of Stenness, and the Ring of Brodgar in the parish of Stenness. Both sites are situated in low-lying areas with views of the countryside,

Figure 5.11: *The Ring of Brodgar, Mainland (Author)*

Figure 5.12: *The Stones of Stenness, Mainland (Author)*

overlooking the Lochs of Stenness and Harray (Figs. 5.11 & 5.12). Alongside these, there are examples of single standing stones scattered across the islands. Unfortunately, the dating of these is unclear (see Challands *et al.* 2005a)[9]. Other standing stones include the Stones of Odin (ORK1), roughly north of the Stones of Stenness (*ibid.*).

The Ring of Brodgar today consists of 27 stones, but originally comprised around 60 stones (Renfrew 1979: 39). Surrounding the stone circle is a rock-cut ditch dug in segments (Downes *et al.* 2013: 91). The Stenness circle has four extant monoliths, the original number was likely around 11[10] (Challands *et al.* 2005: 250). In the 19th century, several stones were removed during agricultural improvements (Ritchie, J.N.G. 1978: 2). Unlike the Ring of Brodgar, the site is encircled by a bank and ditch, and in the centre a hearth (*ibid*). Around 2600-2400 BC the ditch surrounding the Ring of Brodgar was dug, some 400 years after the Stenness ditch (Richards, C. 2013: 113). Despite this, the precise chronological relationship between the two monuments is still uncertain (Downes *et al.* 2013: 114). Underlying Maes Howe are the remains of a possible stone circle (Challands *et al.* 2005b: 243)[11]. As at the Stones of Stenness, this suggests a pattern of use with certain sites or locations acting as focal points over extended periods of time, like the previously discussed house sites.

5.2.4 Grooved Ware

Pottery of the early 3rd millennium is characterised by a diverse array of Grooved Ware vessels. In contrast to earlier round bottomed Unstan forms[12], these comprise a range of bucket/ tub shapes, including squat angular forms and elongate barrel shapes (Figs. 5.13 & 5.14). Unlike bucket-shaped vessels of the late 3rd and early 2nd millennium Grooved Ware is often highly decorated with applied and/ or incised schemes (Fig. 5.15). At Pool, the use of Grooved Ware is preceded by a phase of incised baggy vessels in Phase 2.2 and 2.3 *c.*3210-2935 cal BC (MacSween *et al.* 2015: 20). Given the chronological overlap with Skara Brae it is feasible

[9] *This includes within the Stenness area the Watchstone, the Comet Stone and the Odin Stone (see Challands et al. 2005.)*
[10] *Ritchie initially suggested twelve, but further excavation revealed that no further stone was present (Challands et al. 2005: 250)*
[11] *During excavations in 1991 evidence for a single stone socket was uncovered. Several further anomalies were uncovered whether these can be equated with further stone circles is unclear (Challands et al. 2005b: 243). A similar situation was recorded at Howe (ORK7) where a single stone socket was uncovered (Ballin Smith 1994: 11) (Fig. 7.36)*
[12] *Unstan 'Ware' encompasses a series of collared bowls, employed alongside a mixed range of baggy or plain wares during the later 4th millennium see MacSween 2007). Unstan Ware is particularly associated with stalled chambered cairns, and changes in pottery appear to intersect with changes in locales of consumption (see Jones, A. 1999).*

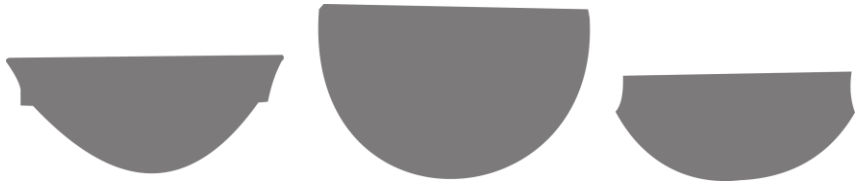


Figure 5.13: *Typical Unstan Ware forms*

Figure 5.14: *Typical Grooved Ware forms*

that incised wares were in use during a similar time frame (MacSween *et al.* 2015: 23). At Barnhouse and Stonehall Farm, incised wares were noted among the earlier phases (Towers & Card 2015: 54; Jones, A. *et al*. 2016: 318). Incised motifs typically comprise multiple chevrons and parallel lines (MacSween 1992: 267) (Fig. 5.15). Applied decoration is employed at Pool during Phase 3, dated to the 26th-24th century cal BC, overlapping with a break in the settlement and broader changes in ceramic technology (MacSween 2007b: 323; MacSween *et al.* 2015: 20; Jones, R. & Brown 2000). This includes a switch from baggy to bucket-shaped, rock-tempered vessels. Applied decoration around the same time becomes prevalent across Orkney with incision forming a minority of the decorated assemblage (Jones, A. 2016: 409; MacSween 2007: 322-5; Cowie, T. & MacSween 1999: 49-50) (Fig. 5.17). Sherds at Crossiecrown (ORK6) were commonly decorated with a mixture of incised and applied decoration (Jones, A. *et al.* 2016: 344). Examples from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11) had cordons affixed into deep grooves (Towers & Card 2015)[13]. Both incised and applied decoration find parallel in the wider corpus of late 4th and early 3rd millennium 'art' from within and outside the Orkney Isles. Comparable motifs are found on rock art from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11) and Skara Brae (Fig. 5.16) (Thomas, A. 2016). Further parallels for motifs can be found in Ireland, including among the monuments of the Boyne Valley (Thomas, J 2005: 170). The use of pigments has been recorded on sherds from Skara Brae and the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11). Grooved Ware

[13] *This technique of affixing cordons into grooves was also noted on sherds from Kintore. In this case the grooves could have served as a guide for the affixing of cordons (MacSween 2008: 183).*

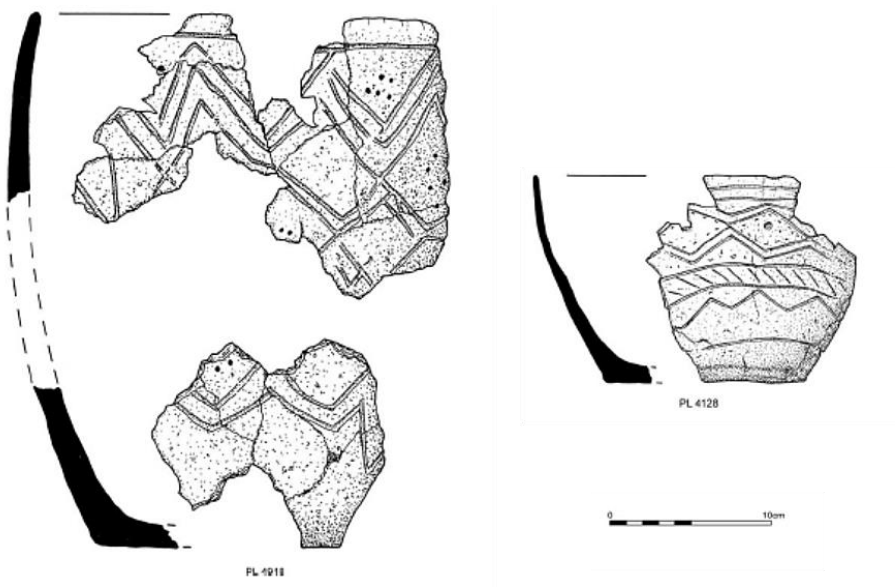


Figure 5.15: *Incised 'baggy' vessels from Pool, Sanday (Hunter, J. 2007: Illus.8.1.9)*

Figure 5.16: *Incised rock art from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Sanday (Author)*

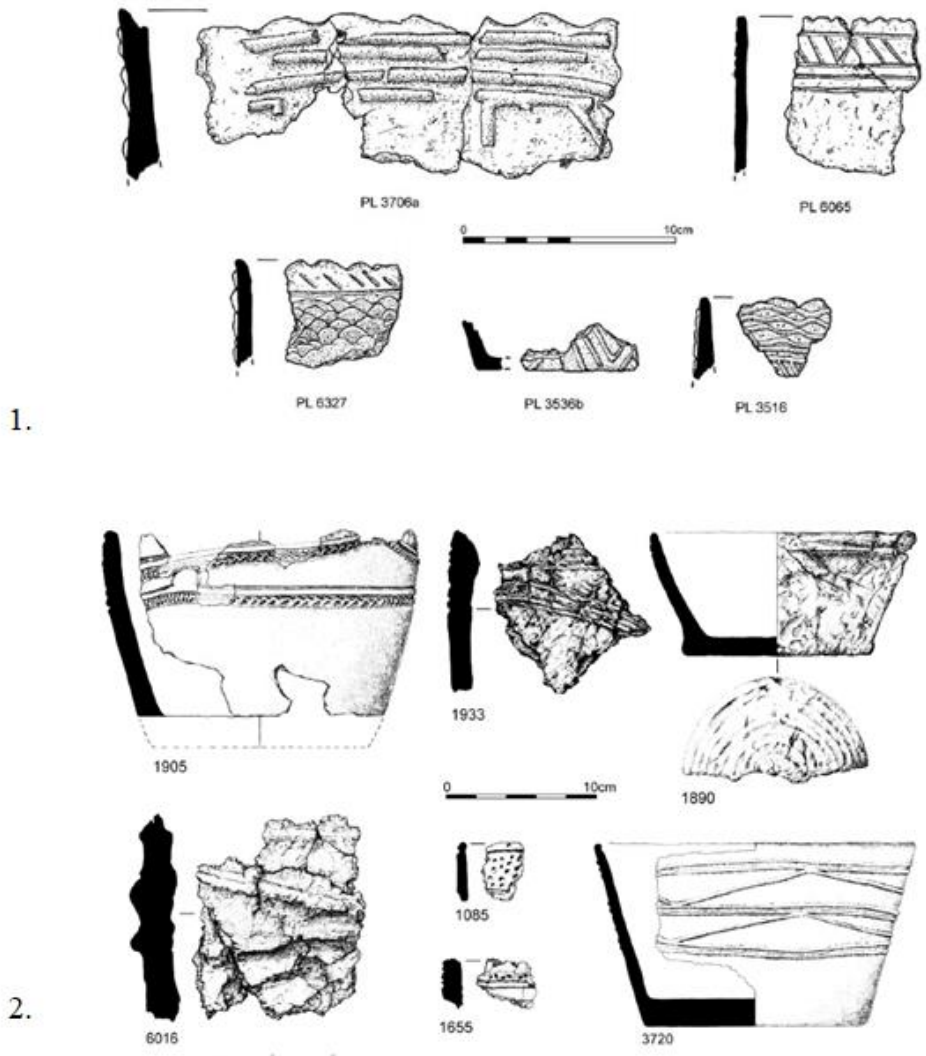


Figure 5.17: *Orcadian Grooved Ware with applied and incised decoration*

Key: ***1.*** *Pool, Sanday (MacSween 2007),* ***2.*** *Barnhouse, Mainland (Richards, C. 2005a)*

and in several cases rock art from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK10) has traces of red, white and black pigments (Towers, *et al.* 2015:13; *cf.* Card & Thomas, A. 2012) (Fig. 4.13).

With regards to manufacture, vessels demonstrate a favouring of appearance over substance (Jones, R. & Brown 2000: 182). An increase in rock tempering resulted in progressively friable pottery (Towers & Card 2015: 54). Considering this it is possible that vessels were constructed for one-off consumptive events. The large quantities of such material recovered from sites could reflect multiple single episodes of use and deposition rather than patterns of long-term

habitation[14]. There is also a recurrent association between the use of Grooved Ware and monumental structures within the archipelago. In this regard decorated Grooved Ware is deployed in highly visible and conspicuous contexts, such as feasts (Harris 2013: 183)[15]. The presence or absence of such vessels could hint at the wider role of sites. At Tofts Ness (ORK19) the absence of decorated Grooved Ware and the associated faunal data suggests a marginal site, operating at a lower level than the nearby site of Pool (Dockrill 2007: 381). Outside of these events, pottery could have been employed for storage, as demonstrated by vessel sizes and their position within the house (Jones, A. 1999: 63). At Barnhouse large vessels were frequently recorded from recesses. These vessels, unlike those used in one-off consumptive events, could have been long lived, being less subject to breakage due to their static roles (Arnold 1988: 153) (**Section 3.3.4**)[16].

At Barnhouse, Jones divided the Grooved Ware into three categories, ranging from large to small vessels (Table 5.1). In the absence of differences in form vessels were categorized in part by their wall thickness, fabric, height and diameter (*ibid.*). As highlighted in **Chapter 3** these give distinct affordances constraining the range of potential uses. For instance, the physical properties of large vessels, notably their weak walls, would have made them less suitable for cooking, but in turn better suited for storage. These vessels were likely employed alongside a range of other organic containers. The vessels from the northwest recess in H2 were interpreted as liquid containers (Jones, A. 2005: 148). Vessels were also associated with the storage of barley, the presence of which could indicate a shift in consumptive practices during the period (Jones, A. 1997: 217, 1999: 63)[17]. The remaining categories, medium and small, may have been involved in consumption and food preparation. In the case of H2 this included the preparation and consumption of beef (*ibid.*). In contrast to larger vessels these could have been more prone to breakage, accounting for the bulk of the assemblage.

Alongside highly decorated Grooved Ware, undecorated bucket and tub vessels are documented at multiple sites, within and beyond Orkney (**Section 2.2**). Undecorated vessels are known from Tofts Ness (ORK19) (MacSween 2007c) and the Links of Noltland (ORK10)

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*[14] Jones noted in his examination of pottery from Barnhouse that certain vessels could be more subject to replacement – skewing the overall assemblage picture, for instance smaller fragile vessels are more likely to break and be replaced as oppose to larger static vessels (2005: 39) (see Arnold 1985) (**Section 3.3.4**)*

[15] cf. Jones, A. 1999 for review of differences in consumptive practice over the 4th/ 3rd millennium

[16] These roles could have included the storage of foodstuffs over the winter

[17] Importantly as highlighted by Jones (1997: 217), vessels represent a palimpsest of uses and reuses over time. Vessels from Barnhouse could be used for the storage of barley and/ or milk (1997: 216-8)

Vessel Category	*Fabric**	*Size*
Large	A, B, B1	Wall thickness: 16-30mm Volume: 10,000-35,000 cc
Medium	A C	Wall thickness: 9-15mm Volume 2000-8000 cc
Small	C, D, E	Wall thickness: 3-7mm Volume: 2000-3000 cc

Table 5.1: *Vessel sizes based on wall thickness and volume from Barnhouse (Jones, A. 2005: 263).*

Fabric A: *Rock tempered – 10-30%,* **Fabric B:** *Rock tempered – 50% or more,* **Fabric B1:** *Rock tempered – 50% or more and 10% shell,* **Fabric C:** *Shell tempered – 10-30%* **Fabric D:** *Untempered – naturally occurring quartz inclusions,* **Fabric E:** *Untempered*

(Sheridan 1999: 118)[18]. The role and significance of these plain wares has been obscured by a focus on decorated Grooved Ware, and the generally undiagnostic nature of plain coarse wares (*e.g.* Grant 1933: 346; Leivers & Thomas, J. 2015:112) (**Sections 2.2** & **2.3**). As MacSween notes in the case of Tofts Ness (ORK19), the undecorated vessels could not be assigned to either Unstan or Grooved Ware (2007b: 281). This suggests that rather than a single Grooved Ware tradition there are multiple regional forms encompassing decorated and plain vessels, the latter persisting into the later 3rd and 2nd millennium (**Section 7.2**). Importantly, the size range of these vessels overlaps with decorated Grooved Ware implying a similar function. Considering this the primary difference between plain and decorated Grooved Ware lies in the way vessels were categorised through use. Decorated vessels can be argued to be deployed in highly visible processes, linked to communal feasts (Jones, A. 1999). These processes will be examined further in the following section.

5.2.5 Process & complexity

Alongside changes in architecture and the roles of pottery in the early 3rd millennium, the use of Grooved Ware suggests that several changes occurred across the region. Among these are the emergence of hall-like structures and distinct forms of material culture, including Grooved

[18] *Examples of undecorated Grooved Ware are likely present on all if not most sites, but due to fragmentation within assemblages this material has proven difficult to separate from the decorated assemblages*

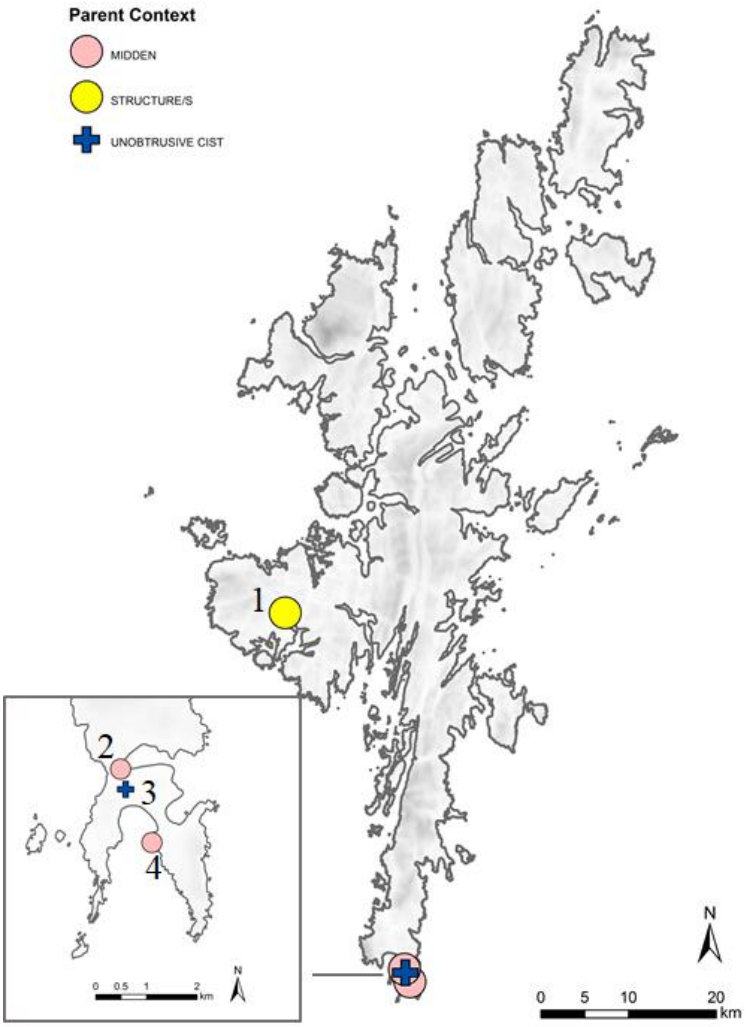

Figure 5.18: *Distribution of sites in Shetland with round bottomed vessels of the late 4th – early 3rd millennium*

Key: ***1.*** *Scord of Brouster (SFI9), Mainland* ***2.*** *West Voe, Mainland,* ***3.*** *Sumburgh Cist, Mainland,* ***4.*** *Jarlshof, Mainland*

Ware. These changes have a strong regional character with the rate and nature of change varying across the archipelago. In this regard, while the use of Grooved Ware cites a larger macro-scale network, it is deployed within specific regional assemblages, moving between the micro and macro level (Harris 2013: 183). Late Grooved Ware emphasises the notion of macro scale identities with increased convergence in decoration between sites (Jones A. *et al.* 2016: 409). These changes can be situated alongside the fluid and dynamic history of 'big houses'. The long chronologies of these sites being punctuated with stops and gaps. In the case of Pool, the break in settlement was associated with the use of different potting technology, forms and modes of decoration (MacSween 2007b: 325). As highlighted recently, Orkney is inherently

unstable, subject to moments of rupture and innovation (Richards, C. *et al.* 2016: 253). This ever-changing world was grounded in ideas of achievement, lineage, decent and material competition expressed in the changing nature of 'big houses', domestic sites, burial practices and material culture (*ibid.*: 243).

The monuments of the Brodgar-Stenness area provide an ideal snapshot of this process, with the Barnhouse settlement culminating in the construction of Str. 8. Following its abandonment, the area became the focus for a series of standing stones (*cf.* Richards, C. 2013). The neighbouring site at the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11) continued to grow and contract, with Str. 10 dominating the final phases (Towers *et al.* 2015: 2-3; Thomas, A. 2016: Figure 113). Whilst certain sites experienced periods of expansion followed by contraction, smaller sites such as Tofts Ness (ORK19) and Crossiecrown (ORK6) appear to have weathered these processes showing evidence of continuity into the later 3rd and 2nd millennium. Recent work at Muckquoy, Redland, Mainland has shown that the site was likely enclosed in the 2nd millennium (Richards, C. *et al.* 2016a: 250). In this light, the history of Orkney in the early 3rd millennium is one of fluid relations, formed of residues of past buildings and material culture. By the later 3rd millennium, these are increasingly unstable, leading to the decline of certain practices and elements of the assemblage (*ibid.*: 253). This sees a shift in the focus of Orkney from widespread connections with Ireland and other parts of Britain (*i.e.* Sheridan 2004b) to Shetland.

5.3 Shetland and Fair Isle

5.3.1 Nature of the evidence

Round-bottomed vessels are the primary ceramic form in use from *c.* 3500 BC (Sheridan 2012a: 21; Walsh & Melton 2011: Table 1). Vessels are predominantly round-bottomed with open profiles with simple or inturned rims (Fig. 5.19). Several examples have been recorded from a cluster of sites concentrated around the southern tip of the mainland (Fig. 5.18). Three bowls were recovered from the Sumburgh Cist, Mainland, which was in use for around 400 years during the later 4th millennium (see **App. F5**). At least eighteen individuals were recovered from within the cist (Hedges & Parry 1980). Bowls have also been recorded from

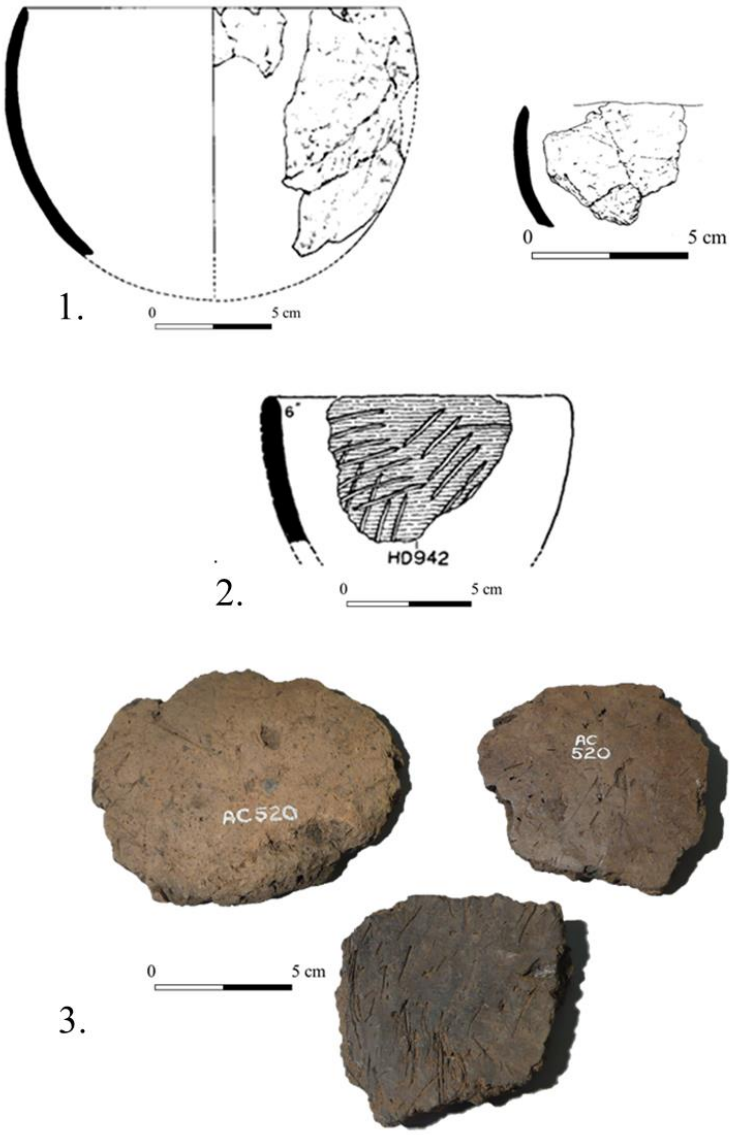

Figure 5.19: *Bowls from later 4th millennium and early 3rd millennium:*

Key: ***1.*** *Sumburgh Cist, Mainland (Hedges & Parry 1980)* ***2.*** *House 1, Ness of Gruting (SFI5) (Calder 1958)* ***3.*** *Coarse pottery from Modesty, Mainland (J. Murray)*

several occupation sites[19]. The use of bowls overlaps with the development of the distinctive Shetland Knife (Fig. 5.20), recently dated by finds from Modesty, Mainland, to 3500-3110 cal

[19] *Possible fragments of bowls are noted at Ness of Gruting (SFI5), including a grass tempered vessel with a pointed rim. Thirty-four coarse sherds were recovered from Crooins Fetlar, decorated with a series of incised chevrons. These sherds lack chronological data and have in the past been attributed to the Iron Age. Bowls are noted in LBA/ Iron Age contexts in the Shetland Isles, as at Sumburgh Airport (SFI12) (Downes & Lamb 2000a), a bowl sherd, HD1508, was noted as deriving from Iron Age contexts at the Ness of Gruting (SFI5) cf.* ***Appendix B3.4****. Fragments of early pottery has been recorded at several sites including Jarlshof (Hamilton, J. 1956: 13)*

Figure 5.20: *Shetland Knife (Shetland Amenity Trust, J. Murray)*

BC (Sheridan 2012a: 12). The eleven knives from Modesty were found[20] with pottery made of "*very coarse materials mixed with small stones and …. stalks of withered grass*" (Munro 1906: 158). This description accords with other late 4th and early 3rd millennium fabrics including the bowls from H1 and H2 at the Scord of Brouster (SFI9) (Whittle *et al.* 1986:59-61; Mason pers. obs) (**App. B3.9**).

The nature of ceramics between the 4th millennium and the later 3rd is unclear. This is in part due to the lack of well dated sites in the region (Sheridan 2012a, 2013; Sheridan & Brophy 2012: iii; MacSween unpub. b)[21]. This presents a challenge in understanding not only the types of ceramics in use during the period, but more broadly the nature of activity across the region (*i.e.* MacSween unpub. b). Direct evidence for other 3rd millennium assemblages is lacking, with most dated sites falling post-2500 cal BC (**Chapter 6**). Despite this, there is tentative evidence from several sites, which indicates that a range of rock tempered vessels could have been in use during the period. This includes the presence of sherds at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), Scord of Brouster (SFI9) and the Ness of Gruting (SFI5) with attributes found among

[20] *The precise degree of association between the knives and the pottery is unclear so it cannot be confidently stated that the pots belong to the same date range (Sheridan 2012a: 14).*
[21] *Excavation on the Laggan-Tomore pipeline revealed evidence for further early houses and activity dating to the later 4th millennium and an early 3rd millennium structure dated to 3300-2900 BC (Reay 2013; Cummings et al. forthcoming).*

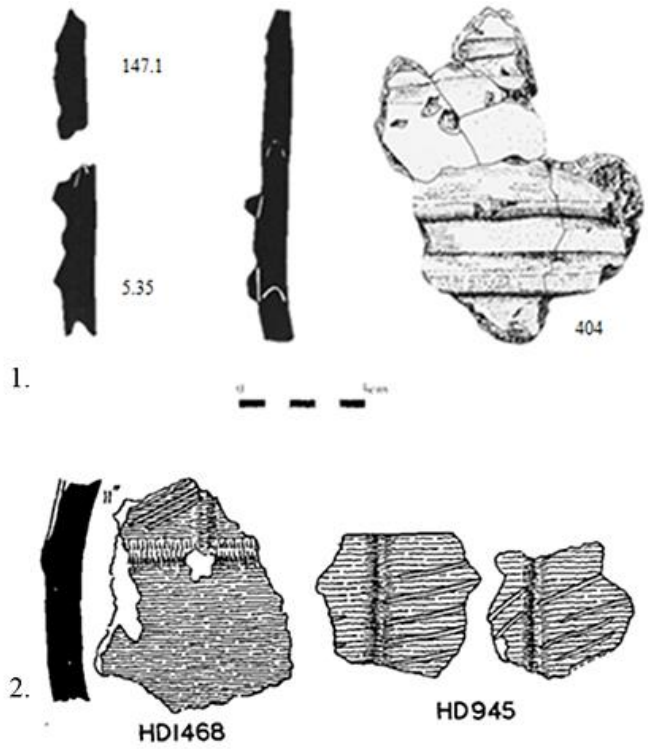

Figure 5.21: *Cordon decorated sherds from Shetland:*

Key: ***1.*** *Sumburgh Airport (SFI12), Mainland (Downes & Lamb 2000a: Fig 27),* ***2.*** *H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (Calder 1958: Fig 18 (not to scale)*

Grooved Ware to the south.

Whilst the grain cache dates the construction of H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) the possibility of older material pre-dating the grain cache cannot be ruled out (*cf.* **Chapter 6**, **App. B3.5**). Calder noted that the material found in the wall core could have derived from existing midden heaps (1958: 352). This mixing of material is noted at other Shetland sites including Sumburgh Airport (SFI12) where coarse sherds decorated with applied cordons were found in Iron Age contexts (Downes 2000c: 60). These have been compared to Grooved Ware (Cowie, T. & MacSween 1999: 50), but this has been subject to debate (*cf.* Sheridan 2012a). Applied ribs were noted among the material from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) (*e.g.* HD1371, 1372,1374) (Fig. 5.21), which could imply an affinity with bucket and tub vessels to the south (Cowie, T. & MacSween 1999: 49). These issues of form and chronology at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) will be further examined in the following chapter. Raised cordons were rare among sherds from the Scord of Brouster (SFI9), occurring only on V6 and V7. Instead, a suite of different

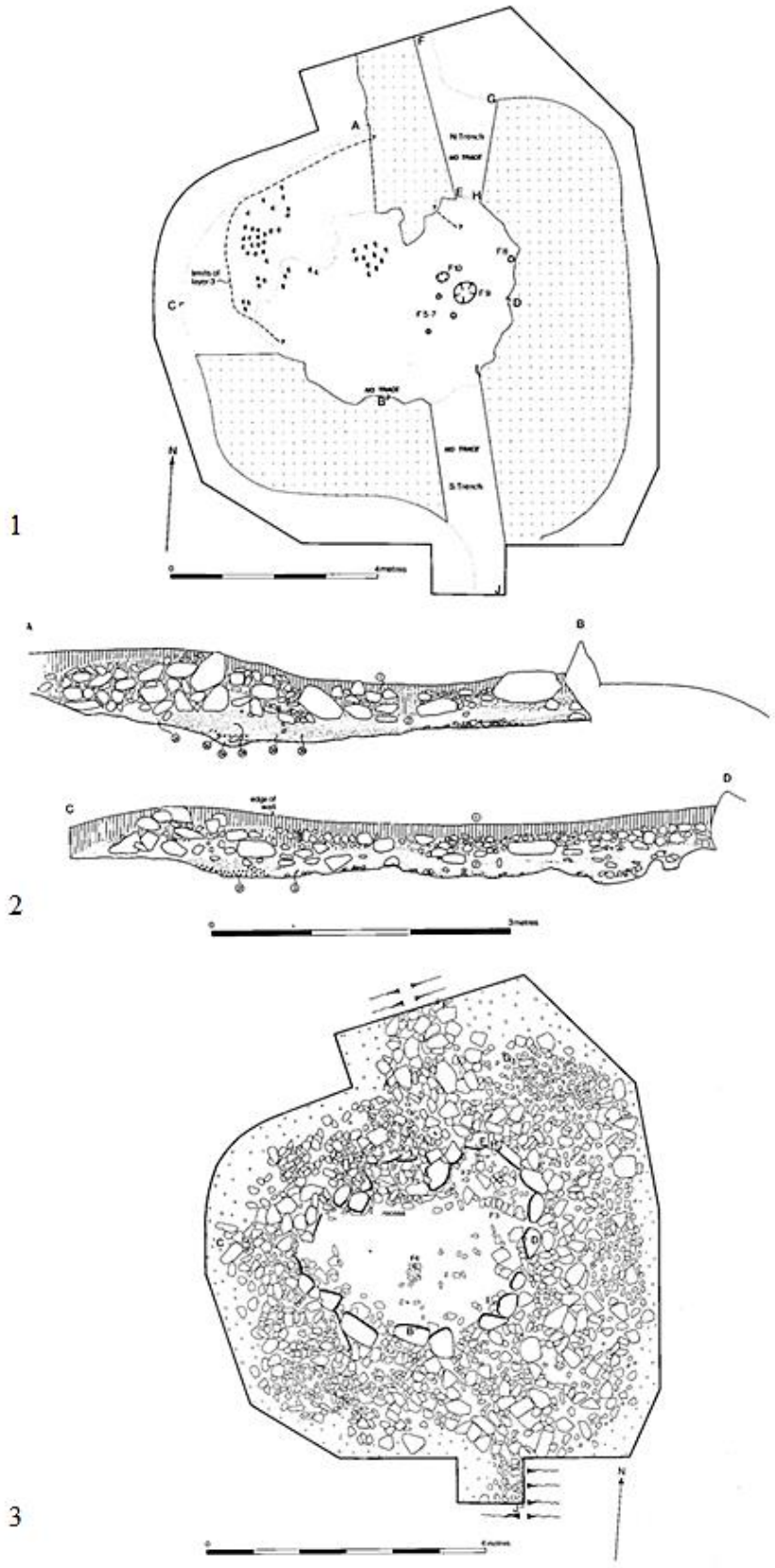

Figure 5.22: *House 2, Scord of Brouster (SFI9), Mainland (after Whittle et al. 1986)*

Key: *1.* *phase 1,* ***2.*** *middle cross sections* ***3.*** *Phase 2*

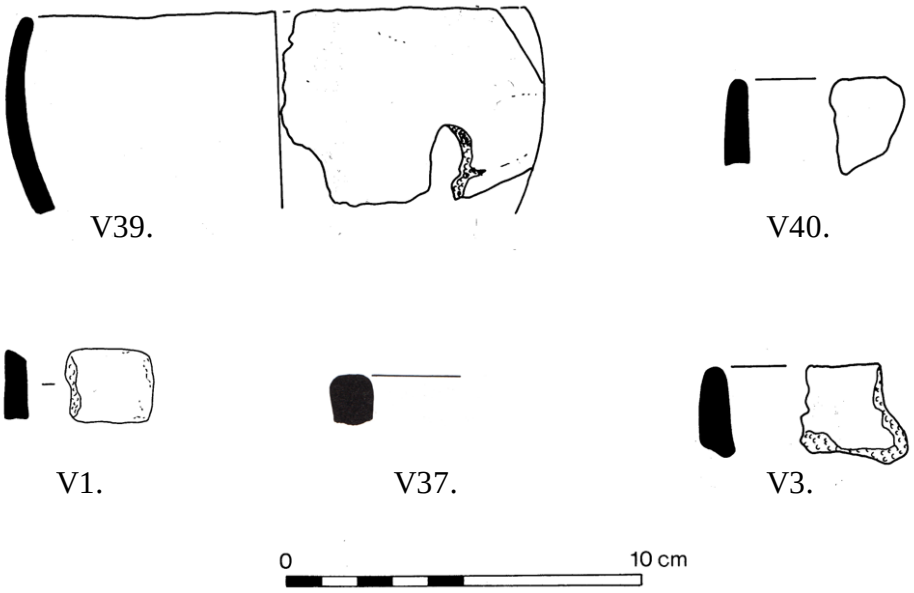

Figure 5.23: *Pottery from H2 Phase 1 Scord of Brouster (SFI19), Mainland (After Whittle et al. 1986, for details of vessel numbers and phasing see* ***App. B3.9****).*

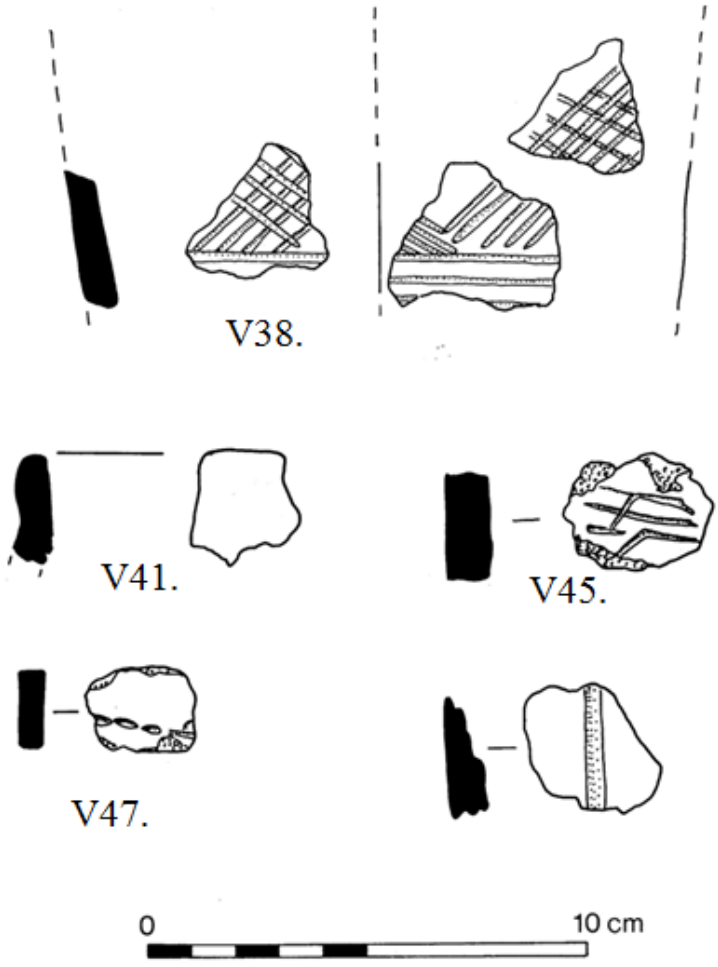

Figure 5.24: *Pottery from H2 Phase 2 Scord of Brouster (SFI19), Mainland (After Whittle et al. 1986, for details of vessel numbers and phasing see* ***App. B3.9****)*

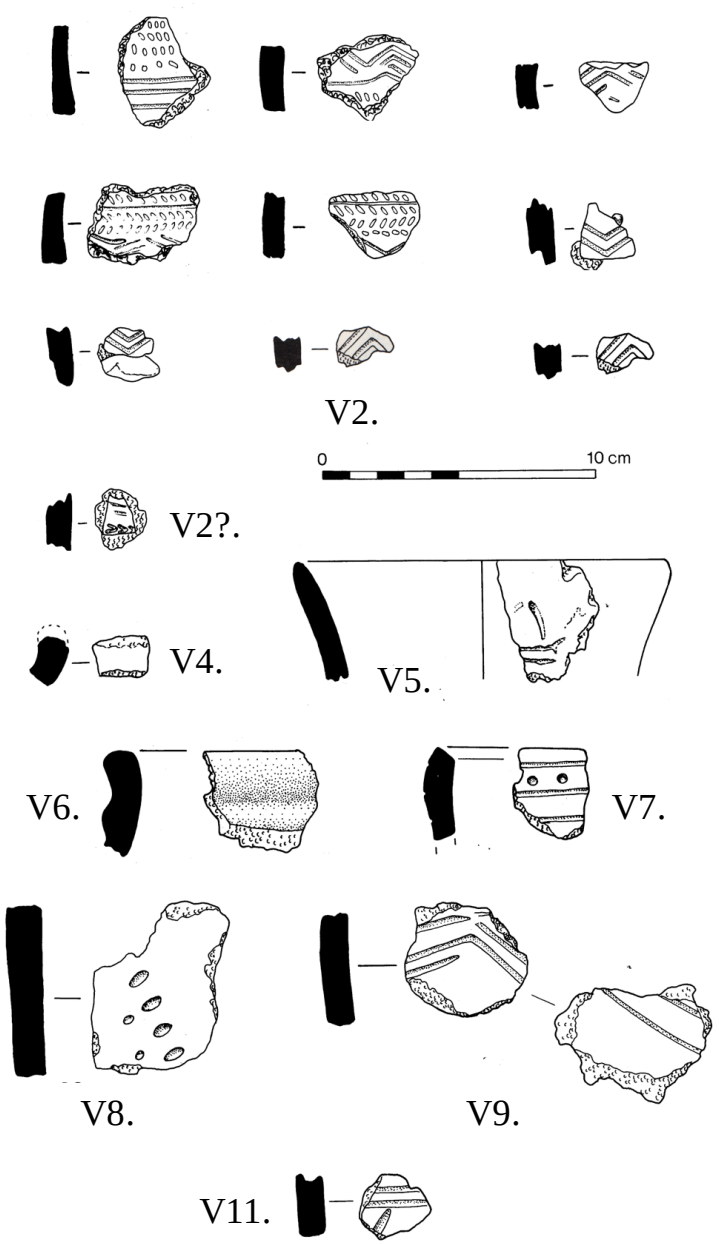

Figure 5.25: *Pottery from H2 Phase 2 Scord of Brouster (SFI19), Mainland, continued. (after Whittle et al. 1986, for details of vessel numbers and phasing see **App. B3.9**)*

decorative techniques were employed (Figs. 5.24 & 5.25, see **App. B3.9**). Above the pre-house 2 layer (L3) were occupation deposits (L2) relating to the stone house phase (Fig. 5.22). The house appears to have been constructed with little interval as no appreciable humic or sterile layer had built up (Whittle *et al.* 1986: 8)[22]. The lower elements of L2 associated with the occupation of H2 were diffuse with L3, posing problems of sequencing (*ibid.*). The bulk of

[22] *Alternative readings of data could suggest a possible break of occupation, with a succession from a timber to stone structure (Christie pers comm.)*

the decorated sherds likely derive from the later occupation of the site, but the precise chronology of this is unclear (Sheridan *et al.* 2014: 214-5). Whilst the house appears to have been constructed around 3340-2890 cal BC (CAR-252) (Fig, 5.26) (**App. F1**) the single date for the interior, 3990-3650 cal BC (CAR-253) (**App. F1**) is clearly erroneous. All that can be stated given this is that the decorated pottery likely postdates 3000 cal BC. The early phases in contrast are defined by a set of undecorated bowls, analogous to those from the Sumburgh Cist (Fig. 5.23). The construction of the wall of H2 atop layer 3f supports this

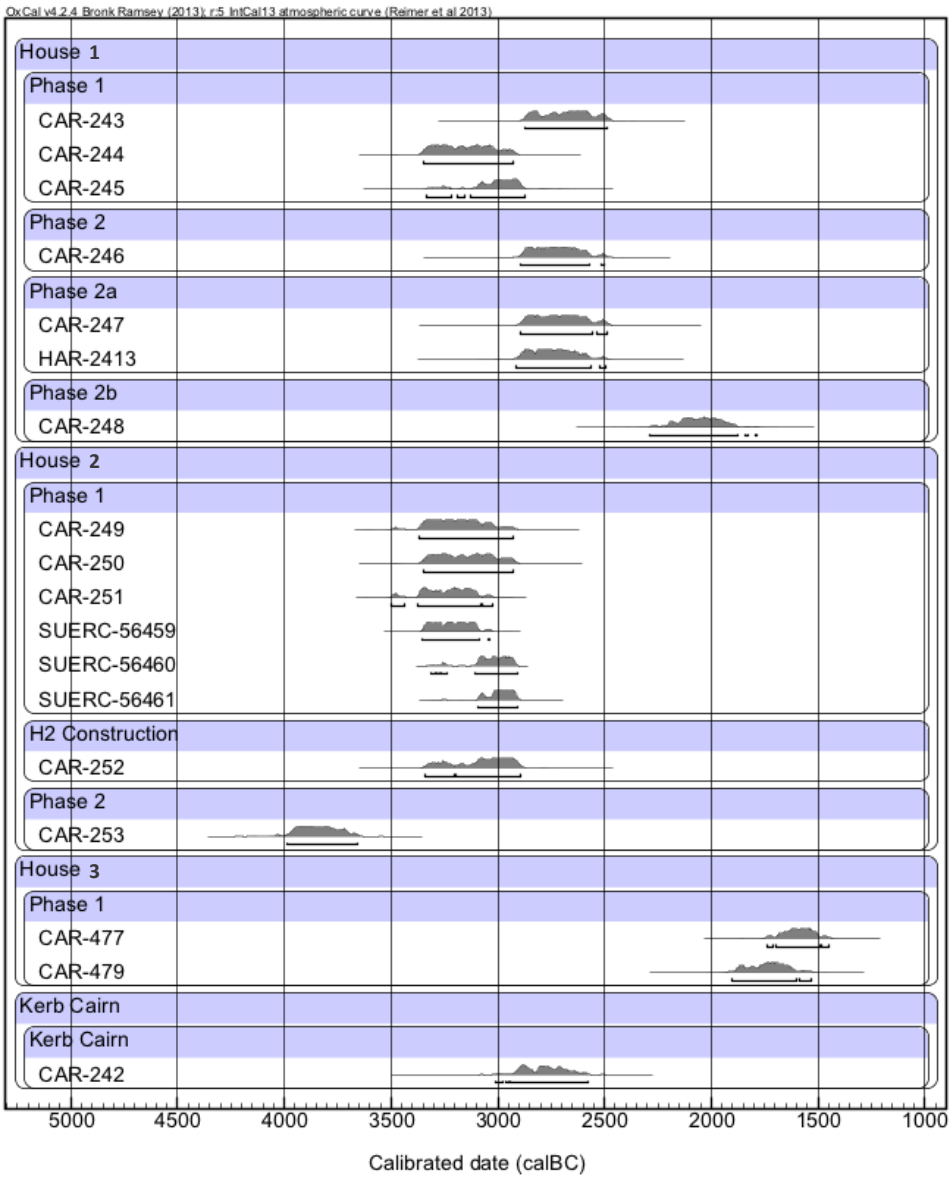

Figure 5.26: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for the Scord of Brouster (SFI9), Mainland, (see **App. F1** for details)*

sequence with the upper part of layer 3f dated to 3350-2920 cal BC (CAR-250) (**App. F1**) (Fig. 5.26)[23].

Whether the decorated pottery equates to single or multiple phases cannot at present be resolved (**App. B3.9**). Among the material are sherds with later 3rd millennium characteristics, including V5 and V2. V2 was found at the top of L3 in Recess 1, comprising several small fragments. The outer surfaces are decorated with a series of incised lines and impressions (Fig. 5.25). The vessel was originally assigned to Phase 1, but its position in the upper part of the layer could imply that these sherds should be assigned to Layer 2 and in turn Phase 2. Similar ambiguity occurs with V9 and V38 which both likely derive from L3 (Figs. 5.22 & 5.23). A single comb impressed sherd, V47, was recovered from L3 in the western area of the house (Fig. 5.24). The sherd appears to have derived from slightly higher up than the other decorated sherds and could be associated with the rubble layer just above L3. This sherd could relate to the final phase (P3) of H2 (Whittle *et al.* 1986: 12) (see Table B3.6 & Figs. B3.5 & B3.6 for details of sherd distribution and phasing). It is not possible to determine if any of the remaining sherds derive from similarly diffuse contexts (see **App. B3.9**). Among the pottery are at least three rim sherds, V6, V7 and V41 from probable bucket-shaped vessels (Figs 5.24 & 5.25). V6 and V7, as noted previously, sport cordons below the rim, which are found on later 3rd millennium vessels, including domestic vessels and Cordoned Urns. Cordons occur as well on Grooved Ware, which can sport single or multiple cordons (Wainwright, G. & Longworth 1971: Fig 20). The motifs on V2, including grooved herringbone, are commonly found on other Grooved Ware vessels (*ibid.*: Fig 26a; *cf.* papers in Cleal & MacSween 1999). That said grooved herringbone is not wholly diagnostic, being recorded on later assemblages including examples from the Western Isles (*e.g.* Fig. 2.34). Sherds from two further probable examples, V9 and V38, were recorded from the house interior (Figs. 5.24 & 5.25). V9 is decorated with a series of incised horizontal and diagonal lines forming rough chevron patterns (Fig. 5.25). V38 sports a similar scheme though patches of incised lattice decoration are visible (Fig. 5.24)[24]. Both vessels sport angled walls suggestive of a bucket shaped vessel akin to examples from Crossiecrown (ORK6) and Tofts Ness (ORK19) (Figs. 7.5, 7.6 & & 7.9).

That said, not all the recorded motifs find parallel within Orkney. Instead, the possibility of regional development or influence from other areas can be posited. The lattice pattern of V38 and V9 find parallel in the assemblage from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Benie Hoose,

[23] Recent re-examination of the quartz tool assemblage would appear to support this with the bulk of the assemblage dating to the end of the early Neolithic (Ballin 2005:25)
[24] V9 and V38 derive from the H2 interior, but their exact position and relationship to each other could not be verified (Sheridan et al. 2014: 214).

Whalsay (Calder 1963). The pitted decoration of V8 (Fig. 5.25) has also been documented on bucket and tub vessels from other parts of Scotland, including Kintore (MacSween 2008: 181-3) and more locally from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) (Downes 2000c: 53). Given the lack of further information it is not possible to fully sequence these vessels.

Pottery was also recovered from H1, roughly south-west of H2 (Fig. 5.27). In contrast, the later phases of H1 are better dated, with construction occurring *c.* 3360-2710 cal BC (CAR-245) (**App. F1**)[25]. As with H2, it appears that the construction and use of the house occurred

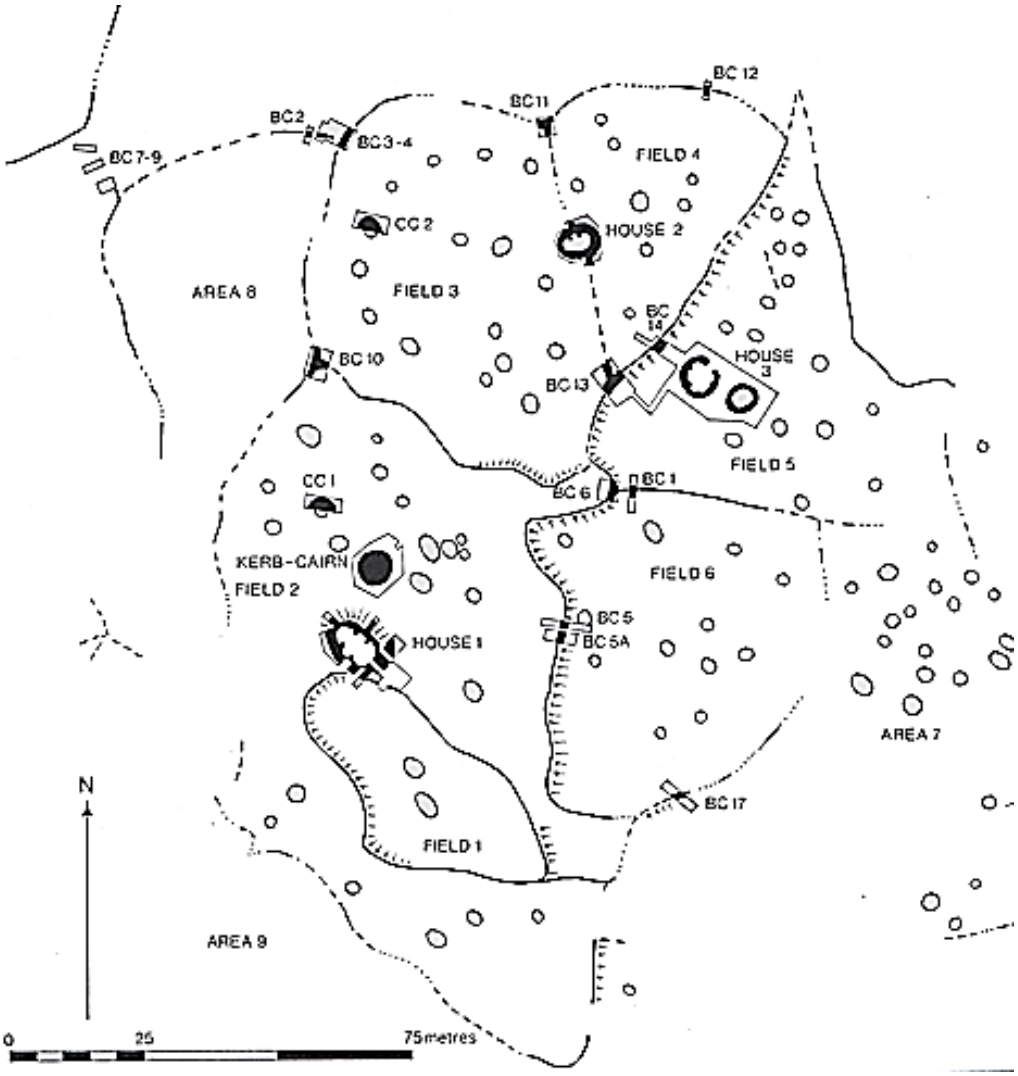

Figure 5.27: *Distribution of sites at Scord of Brouster (SFI19), Mainland (Whittle et al. 1986)*

[25] *The current dates for the material have large standard deviations, between +/-60 - +/- 80. Re-dating of material from H2 L3, as part of this project in conjunction with A. Sheridan demonstrated that the broad range of these dates is correct., It was not possible to re-date House 1 (Sheridan et al. 2014: 214-215). The date CAR-243 has a longer range than the other two and could date material from the later Phase 2 occupation (cf.* ***Apps. B3.9*** *&* ***F1****).*

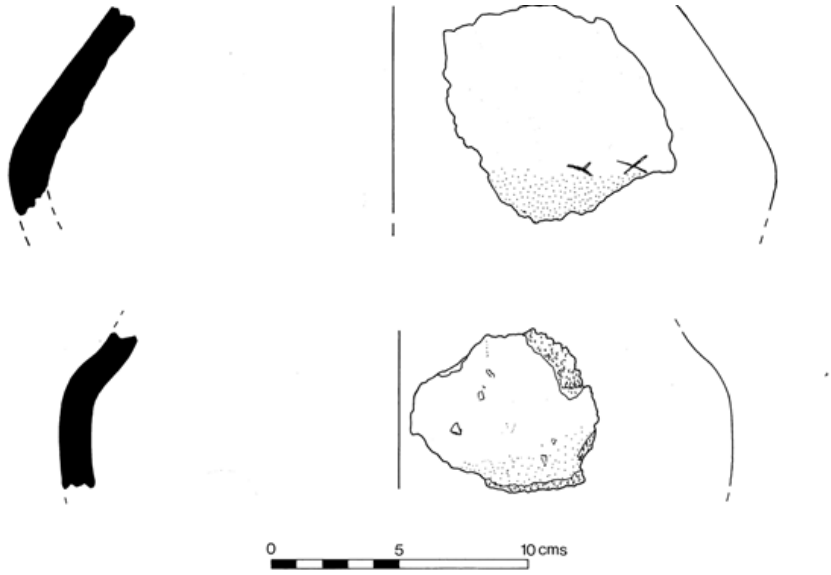

Figure 5.28: *Shouldered vessels from H1 Scord of Brouster (SFI19), Mainland (after Whittle et al. 1986)*

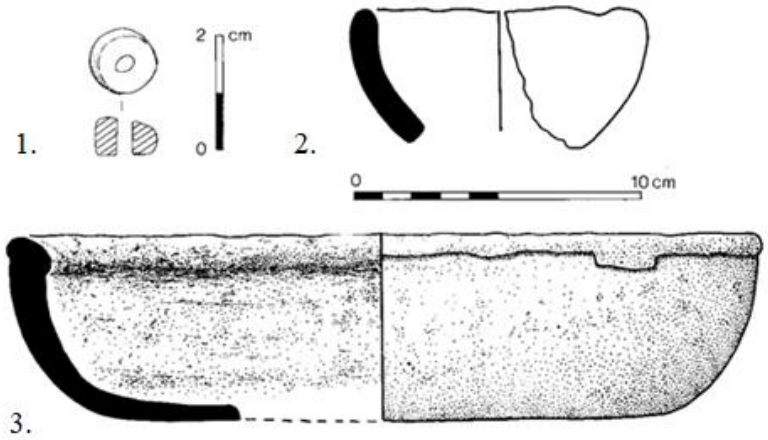

Figure 5.29: *Steatite Artefacts from Scord of Brouster (SFI9), mainland (after Whittle et al. 1986)*

Key: ***1.*** *Steatite Bead,* ***2.,3****. Bowls*

soon after the activity associated with the pre-house layer. This activity appears to span from 2920 to 2490 cal BC (Fig. 5.26) (see **App. F1**). Internal features include at least three hearths, ash spreads and a flue like feature (Whittle *et al.* 1986). Depositional processes, involving the sweeping and removal of material, have likely added to the confused picture, creating highly mixed deposits.

The Phase 1 assemblage comprises rounded bowls, whilst the later Phase 2 assemblage contains a series of round-shouldered jars (Fig. 5.27). These lack direct comparison within Shetland and clearly contrast with the decorated sherds from H2. The closest parallels for these come from the Pund of Burland (SFI8), which appears to date to the later 3rd millennium (Fig. 6.28). The large, heavy-shouldered pots from H1 could have been employed as storage vessels, with walls around 16mm thick. The lack of comparable dated assemblages poses difficulties in understanding more fully the nature of these. This pattern is repeated across Shetland, with sites sharing some elements in common, but at the same time demonstrating marked differences in forms between sites (*cf.* **Chapter 6**).

Steatite, is recorded at several sites during the period. Fragments of steatite vessels were recorded from the Scord of Brouster[26] (SFI9) (Fig. 5.29), alongside its use as a tempering agent[27] (Whittle *et al.* 1986: 74). Steatite vessels were recovered from the heel shaped cairn at Muckle Heog (Henshall 1963: 150), possibly dating to the later 3rd millennium (Sheridan 2012a: 27) (*cf.* **Chapter 6**) (Fig. 6.37). Other finds include an almost hemispherical steatite pot from a Neolithic cairn at Gunnies Grave (Shetland Museum, ARC 19996.244). The form of steatite vessels roughly mirrors that of ceramic bowls, although at Scord of Brouster (SFI9) a shallow broad dish was recovered from H1, Phase 2, whilst a steatite bead was recovered from House 2, Phase 1 (Fig. 5.27.a). Steatite goes on to play a key role in funerary traditions in the late 3rd and 2nd millennium, providing a tangible link between Shetland and Orkney.

5.3.2 Towards a Shetland sequence

In summary, the evidence for the period pre-2500 BC is limited. Whilst there is a phase of rounded bowls during the late 4th millennium, how long they were employed remains an open question. Some scholars suggest that these bowls could have remained in use until the early 3rd millennium (see Sheridan 2016). Current dating suggests that bowls span the last quarter of the 4th millennium BC (Sheridan 2012a: 20)[28]. Based on evidence from Modesty and Crooksetter, it is possible that coarse, straight-sided vessels were employed alongside bowls. In Orkney, a similar mixed range of vessels is recorded in the 4th millennium, with Unstan bowls employed alongside a range of other forms (MacSween 1997: 28-29). One point of note is the apparent move away from a relatively uniform bowl assemblage to a more eclectic range

[26] The precise context of these is unclear but could be associated with the later phases of H2
[27] The use of steatite as a tempering agent sees a notable increase in the 2nd millennium being widely employed as a tempering agent. This could relate to the development of burnt mounds in the late 3rd/ 2nd millennium)
[28] This date is largely based on the dates from the Sumburgh Cist

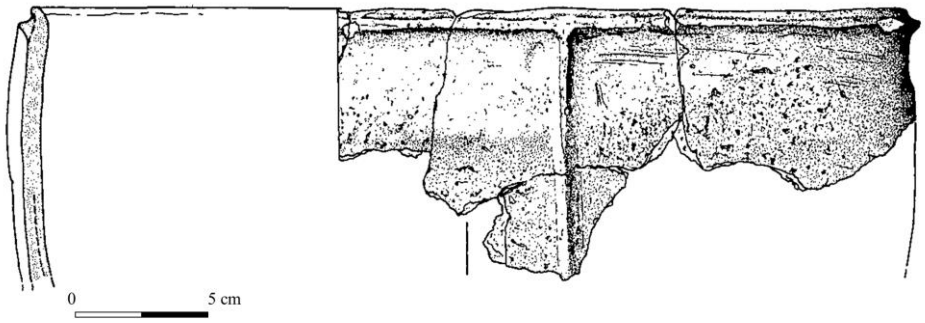

Figure 5.30: *Cordoned vessel from Tangwick, Mainland (Moore & Wilson: Illus 12)*

of forms in the 3rd millennium. As seen, the Scord of Brouster (SFI9) provides the best evidence for the early 3rd millennium, but this is not without its problems. While it has been argued that the decorated pottery, especially V2, from H2, could be related to Beaker pottery (Fig. 5.25), without a clear understanding of the local sequence – and, crucially, the stratigraphic sequence – this cannot be stated with certainty (*contra.* Sheridan 2012a: 20). In the absence of a local sequence, caution is advised when drawing parallels with other regions (Hedges 1986: 30). Several sherds, as argued, find parallel in Orkney, notably V7. The date of the highly decorated sherds of V2 cannot be deduced, but its stratigraphic position would imply that it belongs to P2, post-3000 cal BC.

Further parallels to Orcadian Grooved Ware were noted at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), Stanydale Temple (SFI12, and H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), but the chronology of these sites is similarly unclear (see **Section 6.2**). Whilst cordons have been noted on 2nd millennium vessels from Tangwick, Mainland (Moore & Wilson 1999: Illus 12) and Cruester, Bressay (MacSween 2014:75), these are thinner and positioned near the rim (Fig. 5.30). Instead, it is possible that the cordoned/ ribbed vessels from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) represent a local form drawing on aspects of Grooved Ware from the south. These forms are also associated with the use of heavily rock-tempered fabrics, and often have a vesicular appearance, departing from preceding grass-tempered fabrics. Where recorded at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), this fabric does not appear to be associated with later Bronze Age or Iron Age types (Yarrington unpub.). Similar fabrics occur at Scord of Brouster (SFI9), H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Stanydale Temple (SFI12)[29] (see pot reports in **App. B3**). This could imply an overall shift in the 3rd millennium towards increasingly rock based fabrics, rather than shell

[29] *Further unprovenanced examples can be identified within the collections at Shetland Museum Mason pers obv. These include the possible bowl ARC6638.*

or grass tempering. This shift is observable at the Scord of Brouster (SFI9), with a notable increase in rock tempered fabrics in the later phases of the site (Figs. B3.4 & B3.5)

As highlighted in **Section 2.1** Grooved Ware encompasses a range of regionally diverse types, bounded by a series of shared attributes. It is possible that select aspects were drawn on and deployed in Shetland, creating a suite of distinct forms. This follows MacSween's observations where an underlying 'grammar' is present, but no clear regional styles can be discerned among Scottish Grooved Ware (1995). In the absence of further information - both ceramic and chronological - the precise relationship of these sherds within Shetland as well as to sites outside remains unclear. Similar problems in definition have been encountered in examinations of Grooved Ware from the Milfield Basin (Gibson, A. 2002; Millson *et al* 2012*;* Millson 2016). Examples from the Milfield Basin include vessels, that are analogous to the Durrington Walls style, to ambiguous examples that exhibit attributes that can equally be found on late 3rd millennium pottery (Millson *et al.* 2012: 15). As argued by Gibson, the definition of Grooved Ware in this region has suffered from an "*over enthusiasm in the identification of regional styles*", alongside a lack of focus on fabrics and high-quality radiocarbon dates (2002: 179). Re-dating of assemblages from the Milfield Basin have since allowed for a clearer understanding of pottery and it position in wider networks (Millson 2016: 63)

The emergence of rock-tempered and cordoned decorated vessels could be associated with the development of stone-built houses in the 3rd millennium BC (*contra.* Sheridan 2012a, 2013). This would suggest that re-dating houses to the Bronze Age based on a handful of dates is misleading. Given the small sample size and problems of stratigraphy, caution should be expressed in the reliability and association of these dates. Changes in architecture and pottery could have drawn on external influences, including the Orkney Isles to the south. Other evidence for external contacts includes the presence of cushion mace heads (Sheridan 2012a: 22; Cummings *et al. forthcoming*). As will be seen in **Chapter 6**, contacts between Shetland and Orkney are increasingly visible during the later 3rd millennium, as evidenced in the exchange of steatite.

5.3.3 Ceramic processes and roles

Round bottomed vessels are employed in a wide array of contexts, including funerary and domestic deposits. The roles of the coarse wares that succeed or overlap with these is harder to deduce. If we accept the similarities between Orcadian and Shetland vessels it is possible

there was an overlap in function as well. These parallels are reinforced through a consideration of vessel size and fabric as will be seen in the case of Stanydale Temple (SFI12). Stanydale Temple (SFI12), like the 'big houses' of the Orkney Isles, is an unusually enlarged structure. Outwardly, the site is like those found at other occupation sites (*i.e.* H1 Scord of Brouster (SFI9)) but on a larger scale. One other unusual feature of Stanydale Temple (SFI12) is the presence of standing stones around the structure. These could have been part of the original construction, or as at Newgrange in Ireland added later (Harbison 1989: 93). As well as the addition of these stones, the building encompasses a series of minor modifications, the sequence of which remains to be determined (Mahler 2013) (see **App. B3.1**). Precise dating of the site is unclear, but the nearby Stanydale House (SFI11) was recently dated to 2570–2460 cal BC (OxA-X-2579-43) (**App. F1**) (Fig. 6.32). The posts, which likely held the roof at Stanydale Temple (SFI13), were infilled with material containing cord impressed sherds (Figs. 6.22 & 6.23), suggesting a possible *terminus ante quem* for the destruction of the building *c.* 2300 BC (*cf.* **Chapter 6**).

During this period, the site was infilled with deposits of peat ash, which could represent successive phases of infilling (**App. B3.1**). This infilling could be related to the decommissioning of the structure, rather than simple waste. Given the burnt nature of the timber posts the building could initially have been burnt, similar processes of burning occur among early Neolithic sites (Murray, H. *et al.* 2009: 59). The subsequent deposition of quantities of peat ash occurred as part of the final phase, deliberately burying the structure. A 'ritual' structure at Trethellan Farm, Cornwall was similarly decommissioned, being partly dismantled and then buried under its own structural material (Nowakowski 2001: 143). Decommissioning episodes are well documented at Orcadian sites including the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), where the closing deposits of Str. 10 involved the placing of multiple cattle skulls and deer carcasses (Towers *et al.* 2017: 27; see Mainland *et al.* 2014). Similar processes of infill and decommissioning could be extended to explain the presence of large quantities of peat ash at other Shetland house sites. At Crooksetter, excavation ahead of the construction of a gas processing plant revealed the remains of small-scale early Neolithic settlement (Cummings *et al. forthcoming*). The sub-circular house produced evidence for felsite working, and a large *in situ* burnt deposit (Feature K) which could represent the remains of a special event. This event has been suggested to belong to either a cremation or the burning of a structure. Dating of Feature K suggests a date range of 3495-3350 cal BC. Among the remains of the deposit were sherds of pottery, barley grains and felsite axes and other felsite objects. The pottery from the feature likely belongs to the earlier undecorated traction of round-based

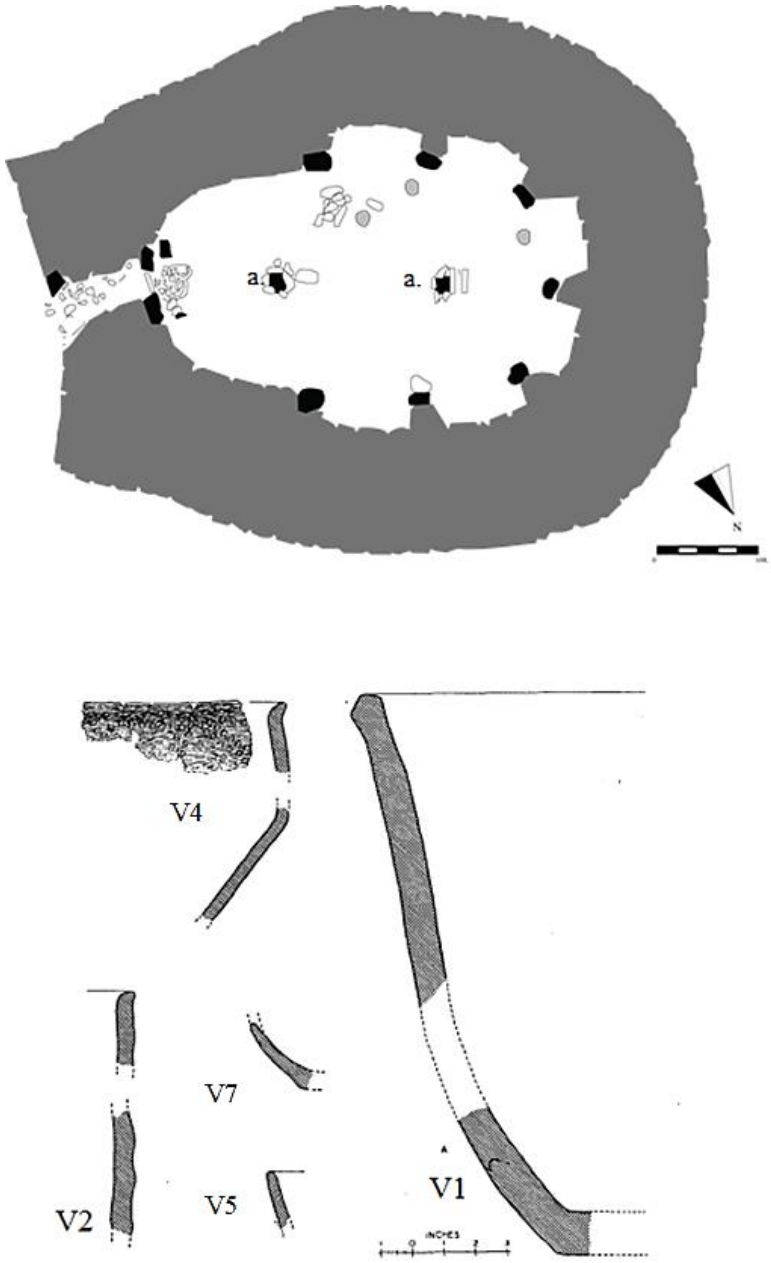

Figure 5.31: *Plan of Stanydale Temple (SFI12), Mainland and associated pottery (after Calder 1952) (For details of vessel groups see* ***App. B2****)*

bowls, based on their form and fabric (MacSween unpub. b). The vessels were tempered with steatite and organic materials, mirroring the fabrics of other early vessels (*ibid.*).

The lowest level below the peat ash at Stanydale Temple (SFI12) contained fragments of a large rounded tub form, V1 (Fig. 5.31) (Calder 1952: 194). The rim diameter is approximately 350 mm, the walls over 25mm thick. The outer surface is slipped/ smoothed red, and encrusted

with black soot, particularly around the upper part. Whilst fragmentary, the bulk of the sherds are large, with a good portion of the rim surviving. The rim is simple, with a triangular point, and slightly bevelled on the interior. Below the lip is a raised external moulding, although this is slight, and absent in the original illustration. The vessel came from the front of the No.2 recess and its condition suggests that it was broken *in situ*. A further indeterminate vessel, V2, was recovered from within the same area as V1. The profile is roughly straight sided, but is distinct from V1, due to the presence of narrowly spaced horizontal ribs (Fig. 5.31). Both vessels were found in an alcove, recalling the position of large vessels at H2 Barnhouse (Jones, A. 1999, 2005) (**Section 5.2.4**). Whilst tentative, this argument could suggest that practices akin to those in Orkney - where large structures and ceramics were bound up in consumptive and storage events (**Section 5.2.5**) – took place in parts of Shetland.

H2 at the Scord of Brouster (SFI9) has often been cited as being unusual in the absence of a central hearth and entrance as well as the general paucity of finds (Whittle 1985: 10). The contrast between this and H1 is noticeable and could indicate differences of function or chronology. While localised patches of charcoal were noted in H2 there are no ashy layers like those in H1. The absence of a hearth, forms another contrast, unless F4 is accepted as a hearth. Instead, H2 appears to have been a focal point for quartz tool manufacture, though this was also noted in H1 (Ballin 2005: 22-3). This is the second key interpretive challenge at the Scord of Brouster (SFI9): if the two buildings chronologically overlap, why are the assemblages so

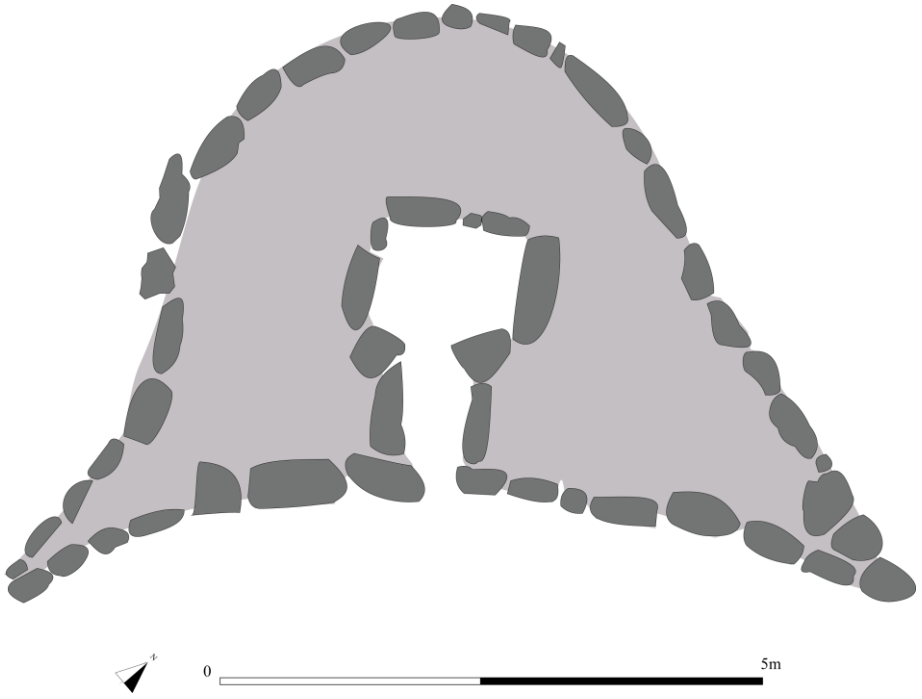

Figure 5.32: *Heel shaped cairn at Isleburgh, Mainland (after Calder 1965: Fig. 6)*

different? Rather than reflecting temporal differences, variations in the ceramic assemblage could, instead, be related to the function of the building. In H1, there was evidence of intensive activity in association with the hearth deposits, although in the north side of H2 an area of burning was noted (Whittle *et al.* 1986: 133-4). Similar differences in activities across the site have been noted at Crooksetter (Cummings *et al. forthcoming*).

In contrast to the domestic situation, the nature of funerary practices is unclear. The common form of a cairn in Shetland is heel-shaped (see Henshall 1962: Chp. 5). Cairns typically comprise a simple square chamber with a round cairn and heel-shaped façade. As at Isleburgh, Mainland, the interior tends to consist of a simple square chamber (Fig. 5.32). These, however, could date to the later 3rd millennium (Sheridan 2012a: 65) and are further examined in the next chapter. Other funerary rites could include cist burial, as at Sumburgh, but other dated burials for the early 3rd millennium are rare[30]. Whilst pottery is found in the earlier burial at Sumburgh it is unclear if pottery continued to be deployed in funerary rites throughout the early 3rd millennium. It is possible that - as in Orkney - there was a shift away from the deployment of pottery in funerary contexts towards an increased use in a domestic context (*cf.* Jones, A. 1999).

5.3.4 Summary: Key trends

From the preceding review, several tentative observations can be made. The first of these is the establishment of a broad sequence, moving from round-based vessels to flat-based bucket and tub types, with perhaps an overlapping group of decorated and plain bowls. The shouldered vessels from H1 Scord of Brouster (SFI9) can be included among these. It has also been suggested that material from Stanydale Temple (SFI12), Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) and H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) could date to the earlier- mid 3rd millennium. Steatite is employed alongside pottery during this period, continuing in use into the Norse period (see Forster & Sharman 2009 for a review of steatite use in Shetland). The precise chronology of changes in ceramics from the 4th to early 3rd millennium is still unclear. Due to stylistic similarity with Orcadian sites, I would contend that bucket and tub vessels are probably employed around the first half of the 3rd millennium. This could coincide with the initial use and construction of several of the stone house sites. Considering current chronological and stratigraphic uncertainties it cannot be resolved at present whether these should be equated with Grooved Ware. Importantly, aspects of the argument rest on semantic points relating to what one defines

[30] *Gough noted the presence of a cist containing multiple human remains at Dunrosness. The cist contained around nine skulls and the bodies had not been arranged in any order (1786: xiii)*

Figure 5.33: *Structures at Pinhoulland, Mainland (Author)*

as Grooved Ware. As highlighted above Grooved Ware is a polythetic category encompassing a diverse array of types underpinned by an overall 'grammar' (MacSween 1995: 43). Certain common aspects can be found at a national level, but at the same time marked regional differences are documented. Bucket/ tub vessels are likely used for a lengthy period, extending into the later 3rd millennium, overlapping with new forms, including the diverse array of vessels at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) (**Section 6.2.2**).

In sum, the social world of the Shetland Isles can be argued, albeit cautiously, to be one of organised dispersed communities that practiced multiple burials in cists. Cists were often elaborated using heel shaped architecture, which is common in the late 3rd millennium. At Vementry, the façade was added to an existing monument (*ibid.*), and it is possible that the façade at Stanydale Temple (SFI12) is not an original feature (Mahler 2013: 16)[31]. As noted, this could imply a change in use and function at the site, representing the final stages of activity. The exact time frame of this is unclear, but its final phases could overlap with dates from Stanydale House (SFI11). As noted in Orkney, such structures could demonstrate long, albeit fluid, life histories. At Crooksetter, the site became a focal point for non-domestic

[31] *What remains unclear is how late an addition that the facades were. One possible suggestion is that older monuments were elaborated in the late 3rd millennium, echoing the reuse of chambered cairns in other parts of Scotland*

practices (Cumming *et al. forthcoming*). A similar occurrence could be argued for the Pund of Burland (SFI8) which produced evidence of possible funerary use (**Section 6.2.2**).

Shetland was clearly connected to wider networks of the early 3rd millennium. Links with areas to the south, principally Orkney, are seen in the movement of artefact types, such as mace heads, and ceramic ideas. In this context, the North Sea plays a key role, acting as a corridor rather than a barrier to the exchange of ideas and materials (*cf.* Van de Noort 2011; Cunliffe 2001: Chp. 2, 2013: Chp. 2). In this scenario Fair Isle could have played a key role as a temporary stopping point.

In sum, new materials and ideas are deployed and developed in Shetland within a specific regional context, creating a distinct assemblage. On the one hand, this assemblage expressed wider membership, but had its own character, a trend that continues into the later 3rd millennium. The development of the monumental structure at Stanydale Temple (SFI12) has tentatively been argued to be related to those found in the Orkney Isles, with large spaces being used as gathering points, of which Stanydale Temple (SFI12) is one example. The multiple structures at Pinhoulland, Mainland (Fig. 5.33) could be one further parallel to Orcadian sites, but at present remains unexcavated (*cf.* Mahler 2012). These comprise numerous houses and funerary monuments, suggesting a densely occupied landscape likely extending over a lengthy period[32].

5.4 North Highlands

5.4.1 The living and the dead

In the uplands of the Highlands, around 2000 stone-built huts have been recorded, the bulk of which remain unexcavated and undated (Ashmore 2001: 4; Fairhurst & Taylor, D. 1971: 1). These have been dated varyingly to between 3900 and 1500 years ago (Hingley 2003: 13). Normally, these structures are assigned to the 2nd millennium (or Early Iron Age) as at Kilphedir, Sutherland (Fairhurst & Taylor, D. 1971; Mercer 1985: 79). In some cases, these structures – or activity at these sites – could, as at Alt Na Fearna (NH5), Sutherland date to the earlier 3rd millennium. At Freswick Sands (NH18), Caithness, finds of Grooved Ware indicate settlement in the 3rd millennium (Fig. 5.34), but the nature of this activity is unclear (*cf.*

[32] *Some of the structures are outwardly of similar form to those recorded at Yoxie and Beenie House. Pottery from these two sites suggest a Bronze Age date (Mason pers obv.)*

Chapter 8). Outside of these, finds of Grooved Ware is restricted to the stray find from Dornoch Nursery (NH15), Sutherland.

Given the lack of diagnostic settlement material, much of the evidence for the period derives from chambered cairns, which present a host of interpretive problems. Henshall recorded around 146 chambered cairns from across the region, encompassing a variety of chambered and stalled types (*cf.* Pannett 2003: Chp. 5; Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1991; Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G.1995) (Fig. 5.35). As in Orkney, the chronology and function of these structures is unclear. Few sites have been dated, and the stratigraphic sequence at most sites is difficult to disentangle. Considering this, only a few tentative remarks can be made regarding the nature of activity at these sites. Bone deposits appear to have been mixed, including burnt, partially burnt and unburnt bones, recalling the situation at Quanterness. At Garrywhin (Anderson 1886: 127), Shean of Stemster (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1991: 134) and Tulloch of Assery A (Corcoran 1967) in Caithness, inhumations were noted, but whether these were articulated is unclear.[33] From Sutherland, inhumations are frequently noted, with cremations being

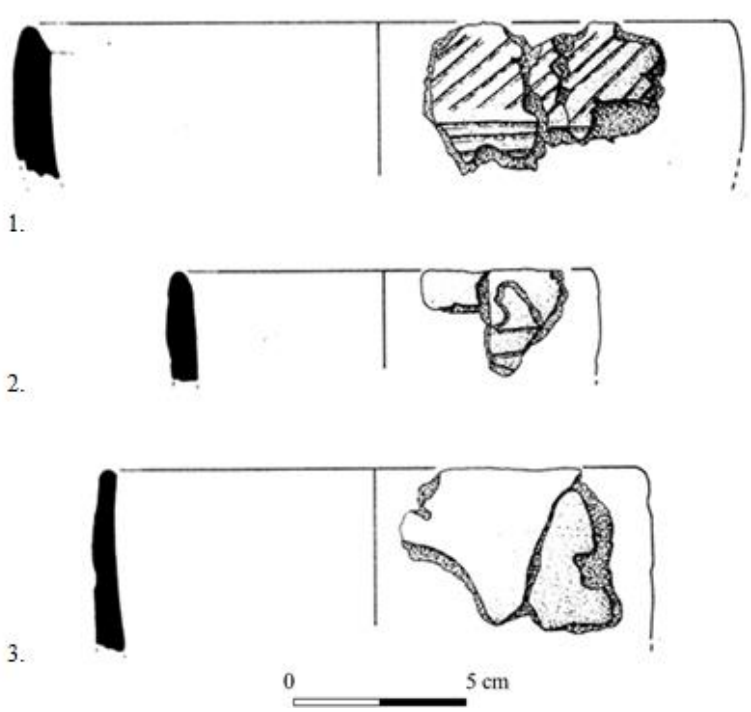

Figure 5.34: *Probable Grooved Ware from Freswick Sands (NH18), Caithness (after Gibson, A. 1982: 408):*

Key: ***1.*** *F.S.1.1,* ***2.*** *F.S.1.13,* ***3.*** *F.S.1.14*

[33] The remains from Stemster are depicted as articulated and crouched, set in a rough cist within the main chamber. The precise dates of the burial are unclear. An 'urn' and inhumation were recovered from the top of the cairn (Henshall 1963: 286; see also https://canmore.org.uk/site/8505/shean-stemster for various watercolours and sketches associated with the excavations.

associated with later deposits (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G 1995: 50). Given the lengthy timescales in which chambered cairns were employed a mix of burial practices is to be expected, but in the absence of further information little can be added to the discussion of the function of these sites.

5.4.2 Nature of the pottery

Ceramic finds from chambered cairns are primarily round-bottomed vessels with distinct collars or carinations, often grouped under the broader label of Unstan Ware. No finds of Grooved Ware could be discerned[34], but in several cases, finds of coarse pottery were noted from Caithness, but little detail is available regarding these (Henshall 1963: 106). The deposition of round-bottomed vessels is analogous to the Orcadian sequence as evidenced at Unstan, where numerous bowls were found (Clouston 1885). The apparent absence of ceramics in later deposits could suggest a similar sequence of funerary practices in the region, with the focus of activity shifting from the interior of the cairn to the outside.

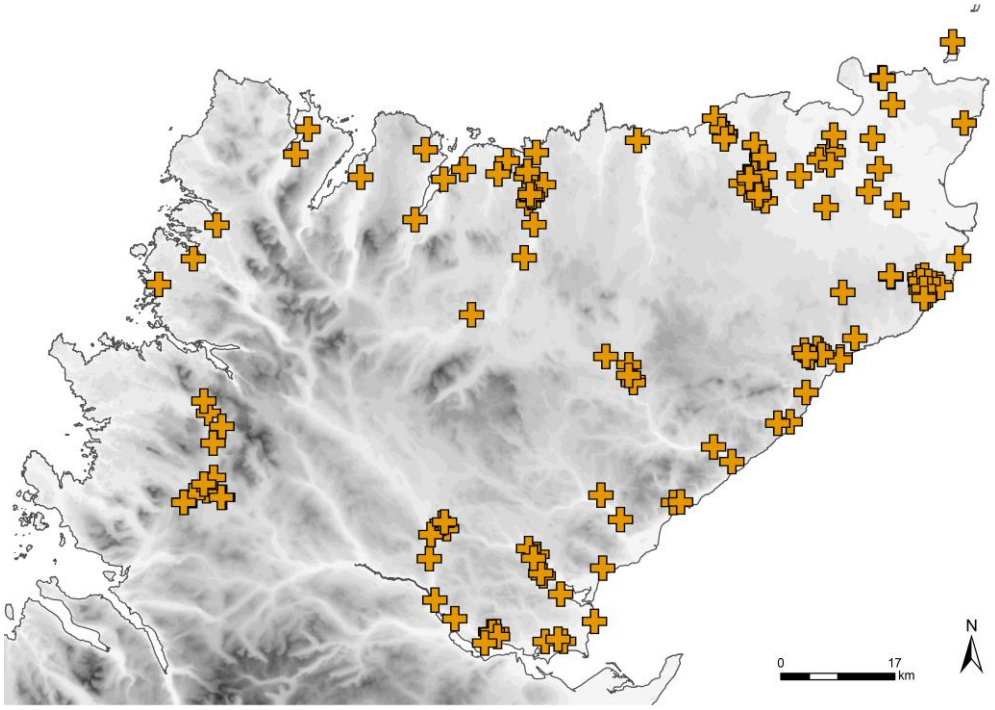

Figure 5.35: *Distribution of known and probable chambered cairns in Caithness and Sutherland*

[34] *ON30 from Ord North (NH26), Sutherland has previously been described as Grooved Ware, but this identification as noted in the later excavation report is incorrect (Sharples 1982: 41, Longworth & Cleal 1999: 306), the vessel instead is similar to the 'Food Vessel' bowl E, of later 3rd millennium date. For discussion of these see* ***Chapter 8***

Turning from these finds to the limited domestic material, the largest ceramic assemblage from this region is the mixed material from the sand dune site at Freswick Sands (NH18). Numerous sherds of pottery have been discovered, ranging from the Neolithic to Medieval period. Among the finds are sherds of Grooved Ware, interspersed with later 3rd millennium types, including probable Beakers (Gibson, A. 1982: 158) (**Section 8.2**). Comparable mixed assemblages have been recorded from other Scottish dune sites, including Archerfield (Curle 1908) and Culbin Sands (Coles, J.M. & Taylor, J. 1970) (Fig, 2.26). The probable Grooved Ware from Freswick Sands (NH18) includes F.S.1.1, a sherd from an open vessel, with a gentle curve (Fig. 5.35.1). The decoration is reminiscent of that observed on SF467 from Crossiecrown (ORK6) but lacks the notched rim. FS.1.14 and FS.1.13, in Gibson's illustration (1982: 408) are likely from Grooved Ware vessels (Figs. 5.35.2 & 5.35.3). Scott describes a further vessel as being a "*Rinyo II jar with pellet decoration*", suggesting an additional Grooved Ware vessel, but the pot is unillustrated (1951: 73)[35]. Other finds of probable Grooved Ware include the coarse sherd, found in the upper fill of the cist at Dornoch Nursery (NH15), indicating early 3rd millennium activity in the vicinity (Ashmore 1989: 64). The sherd was decorated with vertical plastic piecrust decoration.

Finds from the wide ranging Lairg survey (NH5, NH3) undertaken from 1988-1996, included possible 4th/ early 3rd millennium pottery from a soil horizon sealed by House 1 (McCullagh

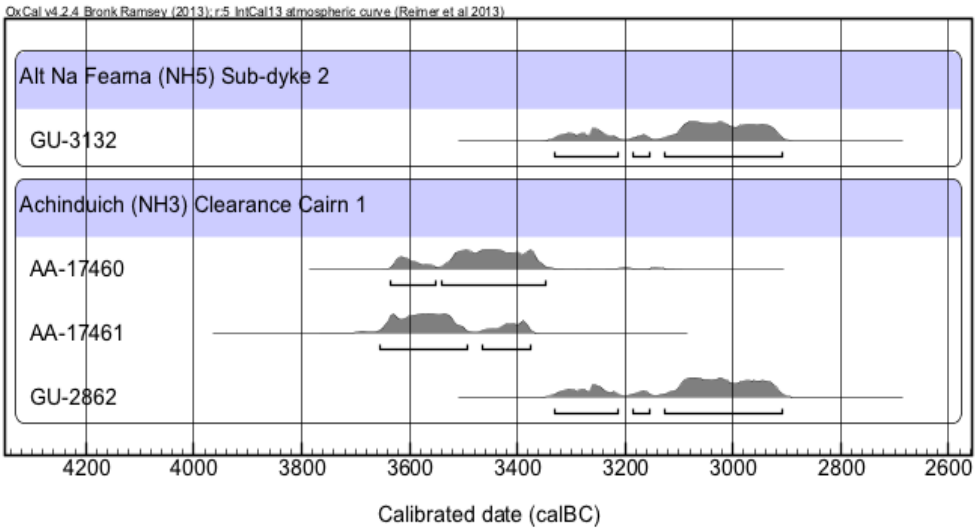

Figure 5.36: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for Sub-dyke 2 & Clearance cairn 0870, Lairg, Sutherland (see **App. F3** for details)*

[35] *Rinyo II refers to the phasing of Rinyo (ORK16), the phase was associated with Childes Skara Brae A class pottery which comprises vessels decorated with applied strips or pellets of clay, the sub class A2 consists of a fine clay slip applied over the decorated portions (Childe 1931: 130).*

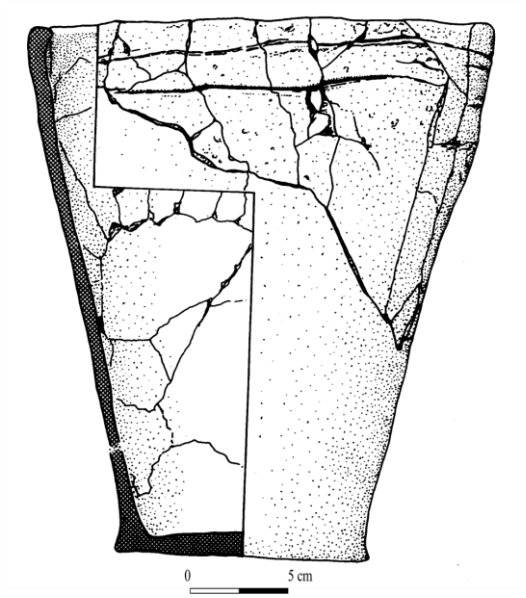

Figure 5.37: *V154 from Dyke 1, Alt Na Fearna (NH5), Sutherland (McCullagh & Tipping 1998: Figure 90)*

& Tipping 1998: 156). Further early pottery includes talc-tempered sherds recorded from a range of features (MacSween & Dixon 1998; McCullagh & Tipping 1998: 95). Subsequent activity at the site has unfortunately destroyed much of the Neolithic evidence (McCullagh & Tipping 1998: 212). Sherds of this type were recovered from the pit under Clearance Cairn 0870, dated *c*.3331-2909 cal BC (GU-2862) (**App. F5**) (Fig. 5.36). Excavations undertaken as part of the 1989 testing programme at Site 1054 recovered a scalloped rim (MacSween & Dixon 1998: 142). Scalloped rims associated with Grooved Ware are known from assemblages dating to the earlier part of the 3rd millennium (*e.g.* Jones, A. *et al.* 2016: 338). Other decorated sherds include V154, a large flat-based bucket/ tub vessel with angled walls and a rim diameter of 280mm. The area below the rim is decorated with a band of horizontal cord impressions and incised lines (Fig. 5.37). This vessel was recovered from the downslope face of Dyke 1, amongst accumulations of rubble and midden (MacSween & Dixon 1998: 142). Additional examples of non-talc tempered sherds were recovered from the pit under Clearance Cairn 0870, where dates suggest a range from *c*.3331-2909 cal BC (GU-2862) (**App. F5**) (Fig.5.36). The limited activity is supplemented by environmental evidence for cultivation during the period, possibly occurring as early as 4200-4000 BC (McCullagh & Tipping. 1998: 203).

5.4.3 Ceramics, processes and roles

Based on the limited evidence, little can be stated regarding the role of ceramics and their wider roles. They do not appear to be employed in funerary contexts, and are seemingly

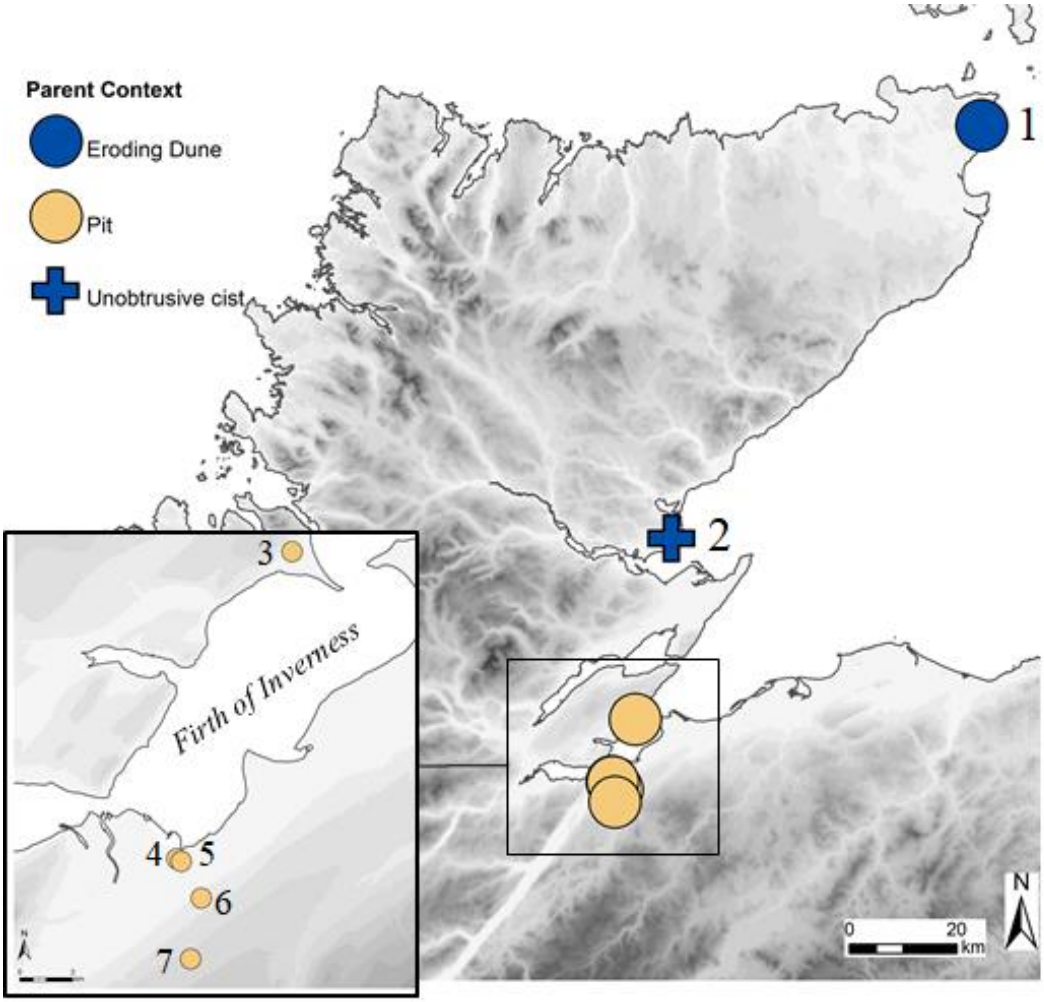

Figure 5.38*: Distribution of Grooved Ware sites in the Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *Freswick Sands (NH18), Caithness* ***2.*** *Dornoch Nursery (NH15), Sutherland* ***3.*** *Rosemarkie (SH45), Ross & Cromarty* ***4.*** *Raigmore (SH44), Inverness,* ***5.*** *Beechwood Farm, Inverness,* ***6.*** *Castle Hill, Inverness,* ***7.*** *Milton of Leys, Inverness*

Other Grooved Ware sites from the Inverness region further finds from the Culduthel area (Sheridan pers. comm.) and sherds from the Old Police Headquarters (Kenworthy 1997). See Table 5.2 for details

restricted to domestic sites, but the nature and dating of this is unclear. The undecorated pottery from Alt Na Fearna (NH5) could represent a missing component of the assemblage (MacSween & Dixon 1998: 142). It is possible that other undiagnostic coarse ware assemblages – comparable to the sherds from Alt Na Fearna (NH5) – have been overlooked owing to the lack of further contextual information. This matter could be further complicated by the possible continuity of plain flat rimmed vessels into the 2nd millennium (*cf.* **Chapter 8**). The coarse wares recovered from various chambered cairns in the region could belong to this generally undiagnostic and long-lived group. Whilst decorated vessels that can be

described as Grooved Ware have been found, the associations of these is unclear. Considering this, it is not possible to state whether these were categorised in the same way as vessels in Orkney. The presence of examples at the coastal site of Freswick Sands (NH18) hints at the potential importance of the site as a nodal point throughout the 3rd millennium. There is wide ranging evidence for monumentality throughout the region, notably in the form of chambered cairns and stone circles, though the latter are poorly understood (Bradley 2011: xx). One final point is the notable concentration of activity in particular areas, indicating that certain parts of the landscape in Caithness and Sutherland were focal points for multiple generations. Several dense clusters of monuments have been recorded in the region including multiple chambered cairns in the Yarrows district in Caithness (*cf.* Parnett 2003, 2005).

5.5 South Highlands

5.5.1 Pits & Spreads

In contrast to the sparse ceramic assemblages from the North Highlands, the area south of the Dornoch Firth has several late 4th / early 3rd millennium assemblages. These are predominantly located in Inverness, south of the Moray Firth (Fig. 5.38). Up until the 1990s the only known sites in the Inverness region comprised highly visible funerary monuments, notably the distinctive Clava Cairns (Connolly & MacSween 2003: 44)[36]. Since then, several early 3rd millennium sites, associated with Grooved Ware and undecorated pottery have been excavated (Table 5.2). These include Raigmore (SH44) (Simpson, D. 1996), Culduthel Farm (SH17) (Peteranna 2011a), East Beechwood Farm (Engl & Clements 2009), Milton of Leys (Connolly & MacSween 2003), Rosemarkie (SH45) (Fraser 2014) and the Old Police Headquarters (Kenworthy 1997).

Activity at Raigmore (SH44) extends from the first half of the 4th millennium to the 2nd millennium[37]. During the first phase a series of pits were dug, including Pit 41 (Fig. 5.39). Pit 41 contained sherds of Grooved Ware, whilst other pits contained undecorated pottery in a similar fabric (Simpson, D. 1999: 129-30). The second phase saw the digging of further pits, filled with occupation refuse (*ibid.*). Pit 50 contained the remains of at least two adults, alongside sherds of Grooved Ware and a flint arrowhead (Simpson, D. 1996: 65). Pit 19 contained plain sherds in a similar fabric to the Grooved Ware (*ibid.*). As at Quanterness the

[36] *For a discussion and overview of Clava Cairns see Bradley 2000*
[37] *The later phases of the site are discussed further in* ***Chapter 9***

Site	Site Type	Pottery	Reference
Milton of Leys	Series of pits, in association with possible hearth	Single Durrington Walls style vessel	Connolly & MacSween 2003
Old Police Headquarters	Pit feature	Single Grooved Ware vessel decorated with impressions and stab and drag	Kenworthy 1997
Raigmore (SH44)	Series of pits	Minimum of 35 vessels	Simpson, D. 1996
Beechwood Park	Series of pits	Single sherd of Grooved Ware	Engl & Clements 2009
Culduthel Farm Phase 7 & 8 (SH17)	Series of pits and spreads	Four examples of Grooved Ware	Sheridan 2011a; Peteranna 2011a)
Castle Hill	Series of pits	Undecorated sherd – associated with early date – prob. not Grooved Ware	See discussion in Connolly & MacSween 2003
Rosemarkie (SH45)	Pit	Single fragmentary examples of Grooved Ware vessels	Fraser 2014

Table 5.2: *Grooved Ware sites of the South Highlands*

Grooved Ware could have been employed as part of funerary feasting, being deposited after the event. During the second phase, a kerb of stones enclosing a platform cairn like those attributed to the Clava Cairn tradition was constructed (Simpson, D. 1999: 125). The continued importance of this cremation cemetery echoes other sites from across Scotland, including Forteviot, which acted as a focus for later 3rd millennium burials (Noble & Brophy 2016).

5.5.2 Decorated and undecorated pottery

A minimum of 35 vessels were recovered from the pits at Raigmore (SH44)[38] (Fig. 5.39). Rim diameters ranged from 140-460 mm, with wall thicknesses between 8-15mm. The assemblage

[38] *Whilst the pottery from Pit 41 at Raigmore (SH44) is associated with radiocarbon dates, these appear to be erroneous falling several centuries earlier than examples in Orkney*

included scalloped/ notched rims, akin to the single sherd from Dornoch Nursery (NH15) and Freswick Sands (NH18). Decorative techniques include incision, grooving and fingernail impressions. Similar decorative techniques were noted on the single vessel from Rosemarkie (SH45). The vessel had a rim diameter of *c.* 250mm, and wall thickness of 23.4mm (Sheridan 2014: 22) (Fig. 5.40.3). Applied decoration was only noted on a single vessel (P1), comprising vertical cordons on the lower part of the vessel (Fig. 5.40.2). At Old Police Headquarters, nine sherds were recovered from a pit, probably the remains of a single vessel, with a rim diameter of *c.* 250-300mm (Kenworthy 1997: 5). The flattened area of the rim sports a single line of twisted cord decoration, whilst below are a series of punctuations (*ibid.*). The pit also contained flint flakes and evidence of burning, suggestive of cooking (*ibid.*). As Kenworthy notes, the nature of the feasting – whether mundane or for special events – is unknown.

At Milton of Leys, several Grooved Ware vessels were found. Among these were examples decorated with vertical lines (V1) and twisted cord (V5) (MacSween 2003a: 39) (Fig. 5.40. 1). The decorative technique of the vessels can be paralleled with other vessels grouped under the Durrington Walls sub-style (Fig. 2.6). V1 was recovered from Pit 21 dated by a single radiocarbon date[39] to 3360-2930 cal BC (GU-9611) (Fig. 5.41). Whilst this date appears early, Durrington Walls style Grooved Ware was dated at Hillend, Strathclyde, to

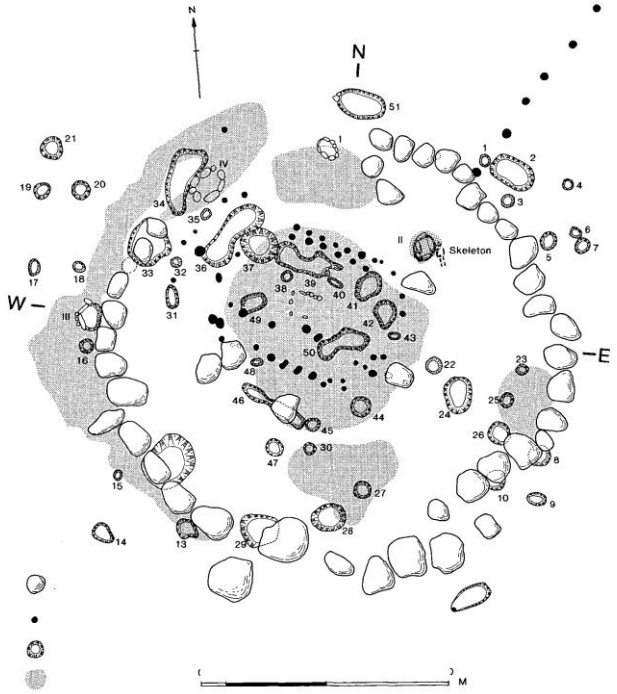

Figure 5.39: *Distribution of pits at Raigmore (SH44), Inverness (Simpson, D. 1996: Illus 2)*

[39] *The vessel and charcoal sample derive from the same context, context 36*

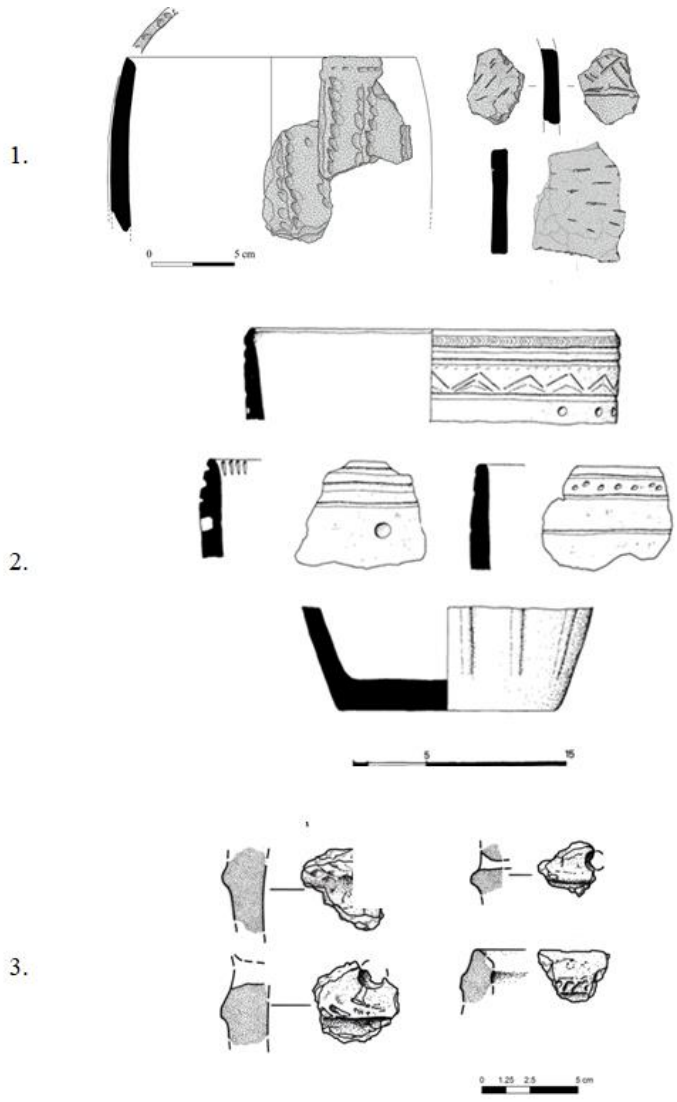

Figure 5.40: *Grooved Ware sherds from the South Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *Milton of Leys, Inverness (Connolly & MacSween 2003: Ilus 4),* ***2.*** *Raigmore (SH44), Inverness (Simpson, D. 1999: Illus 3.2)* ***3.*** *Rosemarkie (SH45, Ross & Cromarty) (Fraser 2014: Illus 11)*

3340-2900 cal BC (Armit *et al.* 1994: 118)[40]. Recent work in the Culduthel area has uncovered further evidence for Grooved Ware and undecorated vessels. This included multiple excavations undertaken as part of the Culduthel Flood Relief scheme and further excavation at Culduthel Mains Farm (SH17). During work in the South West Inverness Flood Relief Channel Phase 3 at least ten vessels were discovered, and earlier work in 2006 at Culduthel

[40] *Other Scottish sites producing similar style pottery include Littlelour (Barclay, G. & Maxwell 1998), and Dunragit (Leivers & Thomas, J. 2015). Whilst parallels to 'Durrington Walls' material (Wainwright, G. & Longworth 1971), given current gaps in regional sequences it is not possible to state whether these vessels stem from contact with other regions using Durrington Walls style pottery such as Yorkshire and the North of England (e.g. Manby 1974).*

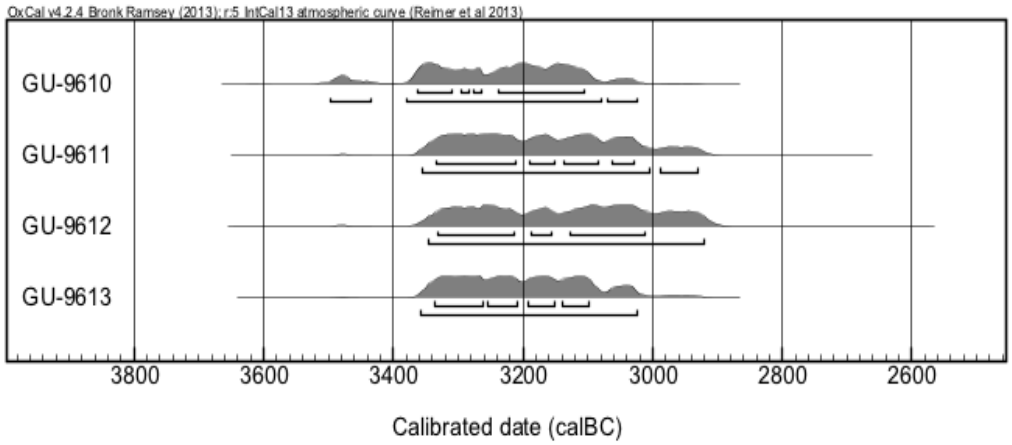

Figure 5.41: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates from Milton of Leys, Inverness (see **App. F5** for details)*

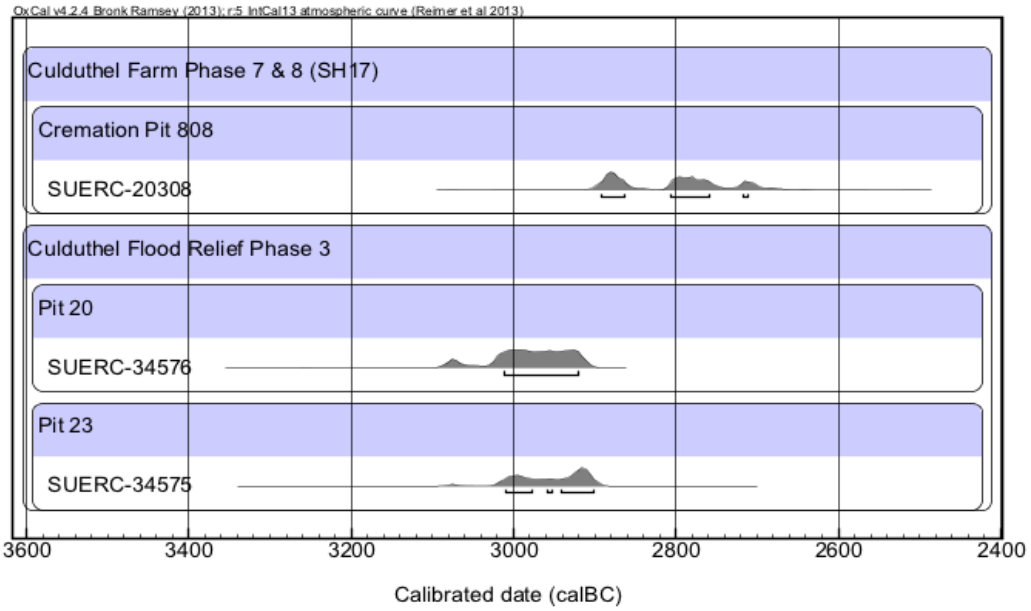

Figure 5.42: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for Grooved Ware contexts at Culduthel Farm Phase 7 & 8 (SH17) and Culduthel Flood Relief Phase 3, Inverness (see **Apps. F4 & F5** for details)*

Farm (SH17) recovered further sherds (Sheridan 2011a: 39)[41]. Pots 40 and 41 from Phases 7 & 8 were associated with cremation pit 808, dated to 2910-2670 cal BC (Sheridan unpub.) (Fig. 5.42). Dates from Phase 3 of the Flood Relief fall slightly earlier with Pit 20 dated to

[41] *Included among these are examples of Impressed Wares, which have been recorded from several other sites including Rosskeen E (SH46) and Kinbeachie Farm (SH36)*

3090-2900 cal BC (SUERC-34576) (**App. F5**), and Pit 23 to 3030-2800 cal BC (SUERC-34575) (**App. F5**) (Sheridan 2011a) (Fig. 5.41).

Other Phase 7 & 8 vessels include Pot 42 with a single line of twisted cord below the rim, and horizontal incised lines on the exterior (*ibid.*). Sheridan notes the possibility that this vessel could be 'domestic Beaker' rather than Grooved Ware[42] (see **Section 9.2.2**). Similar ambiguity is noted regarding Pot 43 (Sheridan unpub). The pots from the Flood Relief Phase 3 excavations, comprised several large vessels with rim diameters ranging from 280-410mm. Alongside these were examples of thin walled vessels for which no rim diameters were obtained (Sheridan unpub). As at Barnhouse, these can – based on their wall thickness – be divided into different size categories with the bulk of vessels falling into the medium to large category. This, as noted by Sheridan, supports the notion that these vessels were employed in the preparation and consumption of foodstuffs. The larger vessels could have acted as storage vessels. Serving vessels include the fine open bowl Pot 6 (Sheridan unpub)[43]. Decoration was primarily by incision, with Pot 5 bearing roughly horizontal lines and Pot 6 with areas of false relief. Pot 9 was decorated with possible applied cordons, but the remainder of the pots appeared to have been undecorated, although slips were recorded on many sherds (Sheridan 2011a: 38). One further find of undecorated pottery of early 3rd millennium date was recovered from the Torbreck stone circle (Farrell, S. 2003: 88). At least two vessels are represented, including a single carinated sherd (MacSween 2003b).

5.5.3 Ceramics and society in the early 3rd millennium

As with the North Highlands, however, it appears that Inverness was connected to wider networks of the early 3rd millennium. These include potential links with Orkney in the form of shared aspects of pottery design. Alongside links with Orkney, connections can be drawn between the region and other parts of southern Scotland employing Grooved Ware, including Dunragit. The limited evidence suggests that a range of styles were in use from the late 4th millennium onwards. These include the possible early vessels from Milton of Leys and the

[42] Phase 9 work at Culduthel Farm recovered a series of sherds of 'Impressed Ware' type – part of growing collection of Mid-Neo Impressed Wares from region. Impressed Wares from several other sites (cf. MacSween 2007a for review and definition of Impressed Wares).
[43] Sheridan notes that the assemblage could represent separate episodes rather than a single event

	Funerary	Domestic	Pottery
Orkney	• Use of stone cists and chambered cairns • Multiple inhumations common in both cists and chambered cairns • Manipulation and movement of remains • Possible use in some areas of Grooved Ware as part of funerary rites	• Stone-built structures common • Include double houses alongside large hall like structures • Sites can show long protracted periods of use punctuated by episodes of contraction and expansion • Range of Grooved Ware forms employed in storage and consumptive roles	• Grooved Ware common. Primarily associated with domestic sites • ? funerary feasts? • Vessels often highly decorated. • Undecorated bucket/ tub at several sites
Shetland	• Use of stone cists – heel shape cairns possibly a later development	• Stone-built houses often in dispersed patterns. Timber structures or elements are known. • One example of larger building at Stanydale Temple (SFI12)	• Move from bowls to flat bottomed pottery. • At Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) cordoned decorated pottery could suggest affinity with Grooved Ware to the South.

Table 5.3: *Summary of key aspects of the early 3rd millennium in Orkney and Shetland*

	Funerary	Domestic	Pottery
North Highlands	• Range of chambered cairns, precise nature of funerary practices unclear • Possible use of coarse pottery in chambered tomb contexts	• Evidence for various settlement sites but these are poorly dated. Early cultivation at Alt Na Fearna (NH5) • Precise nature of settlement is unclear	• Finds of Grooved Ware limited to Freswick Sands (NH18) and Dornoch Nursery (NH15). • Similar bucket/ tub forms recorded at Alt na Fearna (NH5) • Coarse pottery also recorded from chambered cairns
South Highlands	• Evidence for cremations at Raigmore (SH44) • Possible use of Grooved Ware in funerary practices	• Evidence for post holes suggesting presence of timber structures • Associated with pits and midden spreads • Sites can demonstrate lengthy patterns of occupation, acting as focal points for later cremation cemeteries • Grooved Ware used in a variety of contexts, including possible association with cremations	• Wide array of Grooved Ware, including Durrington Walls types • Undecorated bucket and tub vessels recorded from Raigmore (SH44) and Torbreck stone circle

Table 5.4*: Summary of key aspects of the early 3rd millennium in the Highlands*

incised vessels from Culduthel Flood Relief Phase 3. Importantly, the emergence and use of these vessels could overlap with Impressed Wares. Impressed Wares from Kinbeachie Farm were dated to between 3500-2920 cal BC (Barclay, G. *et al.* 2001; see MacSween 2007 for a review of Impressed Wares). Applied decoration, whilst rare, was noted in several cases, including P1 from Raigmore (SH44) and V1 from Milton of Leys. Alongside decorated Grooved Ware, undecorated vessels are present in similar fabrics. Vessels were categorised in a variety of ways, with deposits in pits being a common occurrence. In the case of such features it is often difficult to differentiate between structured and casual deposition. MacSween suggested that V1 from Milton of Leys could have been deliberately broken and deposited in the pit (2003a: 42). The pits at Culduthel Phase 3 could be more mundane, akin to Types I and III from Kintore (Table 2.7). The same can be said of the Culduthel Farm Phase 7 & 8 (SH17) pits and Raigmore Pit 50 (SH44). These could have been associated with funerary practices, including the deposition of cremated remains. This could suggest that cremation formed the principal funerary rite in the region, akin to other areas during the early 3rd millennium (Jones, A. 2008: 186). Following the interpretation of the Grooved Ware from Quanterness, it is possible that vessels were employed in funerary feasts rather than directly in the deposition of human remains.

5.6 Discussion: Ceramics and 'social worlds' 3000-2500 BC

In this brief review, I have highlighted key ceramic trends and patterns of association in the early 3rd millennium. Grooved Ware is found widely across the study area, although the attribution of vessels in Shetland to Grooved Ware remains tentative. In Orkney and the Highlands, Grooved Ware was employed alongside undecorated vessel types. Grooved Ware was categorised in a variety of ways, being drawn into various assemblages. Importantly, whilst decorated and undecorated vessels are morphologically similar, it is clear they were categorised in different ways. Decorated vessels are categorised by their motifs and their association with distinct consumptive practices. Complex interregional processes were at play across Orkney, focused on ideas of the house and gatherings. Architecture played a key role, acting as a centre of gravity in which gatherings occurred and played out. Within these, Grooved Ware played a prominent role, being closely bound up in periodic feasts and ideas of storage. In the South Highlands, there is a tentative link between cremations and Grooved Ware. Grooved Ware could also have been employed in consumptive events as evidenced at Culduthel Farm Phase 3. Unfortunately, the overall sequence for the region is unclear, including the interrelationship between Grooved Ware and earlier Impressed Wares.

Grooved Ware was also closely bound up in the articulation of wider networks during the early 3rd millennium. The proximity of Freswick Sands (NH18) to Orkney would have facilitated contact between the two regions. Indeed, the North Sea region would have acted as a key corridor for exchange and communication throughout the 3rd millennium (*cf.* Van de Noort 2011). Importantly, it cannot be assumed that all Grooved Ware is directly related to Orkney. In the case of the South Highlands, connections to the north of England and southeast Scotland could have been important, including a cluster of sites in south Scotland (*e.g.* Thomas, J. 2015: 4) such as the important site at Balfarg (Barclay, G. & Russell-White 1993). The efficacious properties of Grooved Ware allowed it to play a key role in linking a wide variety of assemblages, acting as what Bennet terms an "*operator*" or "*assemblage convertor*" (2010: 42). On the one hand, Grooved Ware could signal regional networks, but at the same time express wider intra-regional connections (Harris 2013: 184).

Across Scotland, aspects of Grooved Ware, alongside other artefact and site types, were appropriated and inserted into "*pre-existing logics […] generating new logics from their use*" (Gosselain 2011: 212). As noted by MacSween, Grooved Ware forms an overall syntax on which different regions draw (1995: 47). This syntax draws on wider artistic traditions, including shared motifs as part of a wider 'package' of megalithic art (*e.g.* Thomas, J 2005: 170). Through this, vessels could cite aspects of wider macro networks and at the same time cite regional identities. Distinctions in use provide a further axis of differentiation, with marked differences in contexts of use across the study area. The wider processes in which Grooved Ware was bound up were unstable and subject to rupture. In Orkney this culminates in the eventual decline of 'big houses' and applied Grooved Ware. Importantly, this does not equate to a single episode of change. Instead, shifts in the wider assemblage are an outcome of broader changes across different locales and times. By the mid-3rd millennium in Orkney, clear changes occur. Notable among these is the general decline in nucleated sites, possibly indicating the build-up of internal stresses (Richards, C. 2016a: 253). This process of decline is likely the outcome of long-term processes extending back to the 28th century. These could in part have been exacerbated by changes in wider networks, with other regions taking on the role of 'innovators'. This could include areas such as Kilmartin and other regions with early Beaker burials (see **Chapter 2**) The introduction of new materials and ideas from the 25th century onwards created a variety of effects within these fluid networks. These novelties and their relationship to the period discussed here will be examined across each of the regions in **Part II**.

CHAPTER SIX
SHETLAND & FAIR ISLE

6.1 Introduction

Fifteen sites were examined from the Shetland Isles, centred principally on the west and south Mainland (Fig. 6.1). Data from Fair Isle is restricted to a handful of poorly documented finds from cemetery sites (**Section 6.3**) (Hunter, J. 1996). Probable domestic sites have been recorded, including the structures at Ferny Cup, but their chronology is unclear (*ibid.*). 73% of the catalogued sites were domestic in nature, comprising stone-built structures and occupation deposits (Table 6.1) (**App. A1.1**). Several of the sites discussed in **Chapter 5** show evidence for continued occupation, including the Scord of Brouster (SFI9) and H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). Assemblages ranged from multiple vessels at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) to a

Site	Code	Parent Context/ Sub-context	Reference
Sumburgh Airport	SFI13	Structure/s, disturbed deposits	Downes & Lamb 2000
Scord of Brouster	SFI9	Structure/s, disturbed deposits	Whittle 1986
H1 Ness of Gruting	SFI5	Structure/s, disturbed deposits	Calder 1956
Stanydale Temple	SFI12	Structure	Calder 1952
Tougs of Burra	SFI14	Burnt mound, disturbed deposits	Hedges 1986
Ness of Gruting Workshop	SFI6	? Structure? / Midden	Calder 1958
Cols Ness	SFI1	? Structure?	-
Wiltrow (Early IA Smithy site)	SFI15	Structure/ disturbed deposits	Curle 1936
Pund of Burland	SFI8	Structure	Goodlad 1965, 1966
Stanydale House	SFI11	Structure	Calder 1958
Gruting School	SFI7	Structure	Calder 1958

Table 6.1: *Principal domestic sites discussed in text*

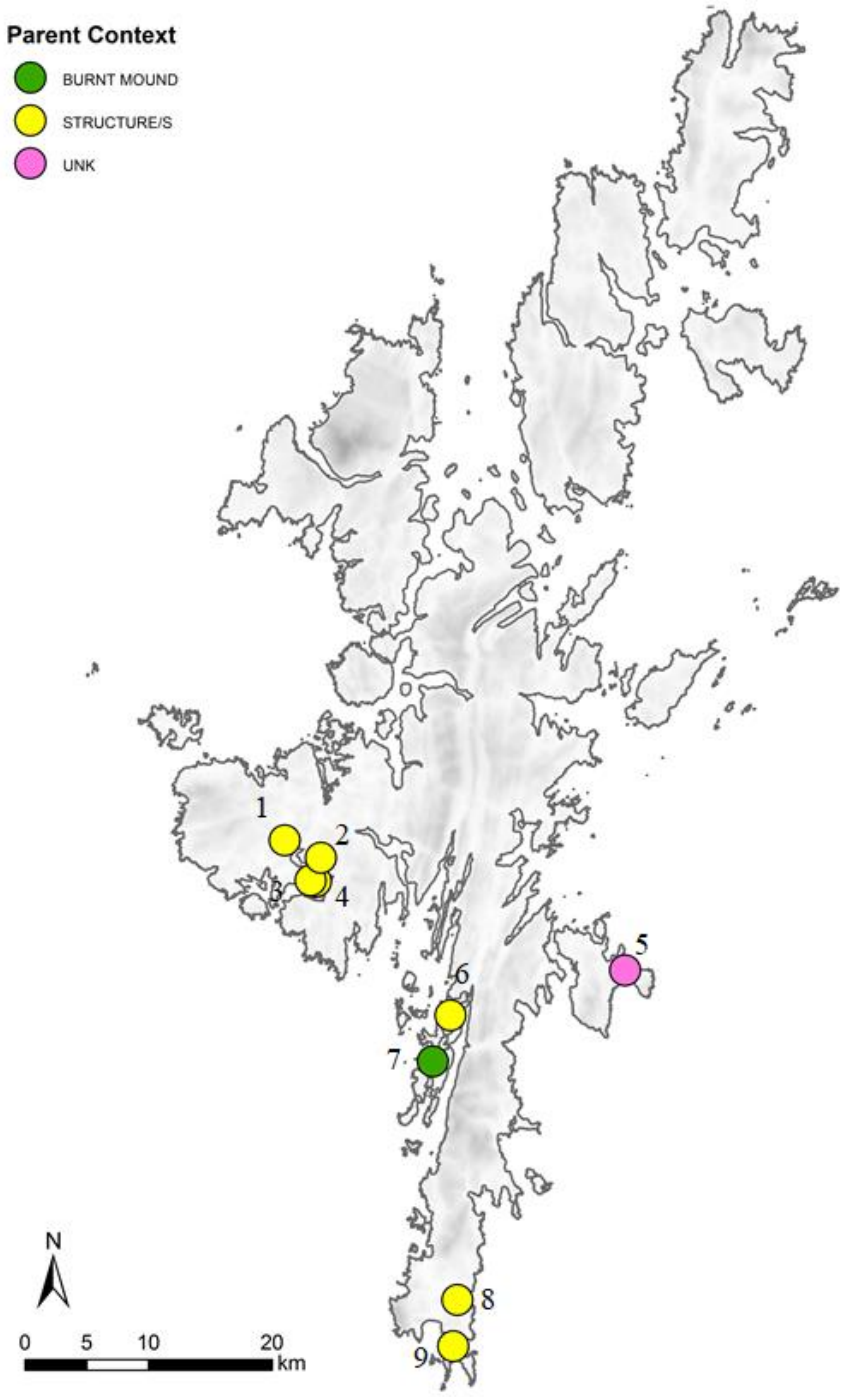

Figure 6.1: *Distribution of domestic sites with pottery discussed in text:*

Key: ***1.*** *Scord of Brouster (SFI9), Mainland,* ***2.*** *Stanydale Temple (SFI12), Stanydale House (SFI11), Mainland,* ***3.*** *Ness of Gruting Workshop (SFI6), Mainland,* ***4.*** *H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland,* ***5.*** *Cols Ness (SFI1), Isle of Noss,* ***6.*** *Pund of Burland (SFI8), Trondra,* ***7.*** *Tougs of Burra (SFI14), Burra,* ***8.*** *Wiltrow (SFI15), Mainland,* ***9.*** *Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), Mainland*

handful of sherds at the Ness of Gruting Workshop (SFI6) and Stanydale Temple (SFI12). Funerary sites formed the remaining 27% of the recorded sites. Four separate examples were catalogued from across the archipelago (Fig, 6.36, Table 6.6). A range of other funerary finds was identified, including vessels from Fair Isle, but owing to a lack of further information these are not examined in detail. Examples from Fair Isle include the burial at Gillie, which contained the remains of a "*stone cup*", a steatite vessel and two stone pounders from outside the cist (Smith, J.A. 1883).

6.2 Domestic Sites

6.2.1 Nature of the evidence

44% of the recorded sites with ceramic material are in the Sandsting parish in the west Mainland (Fig. I). A smaller distribution of sites occurs along the coast extending to Sumburgh Head (Fig. 6.1). These comprise sub-oval stone-built houses, often with recesses in the interior walls (Fig. 6.2). Other sites show evidence for 'courtyards' or additional wall sections outside the main entrance (Downes & Lamb 2000a) (Fig. 6.2). Double houses have been recorded in Fair Isle, often associated with wider field systems (Hunter, J. 1996: 69). Sites in the west

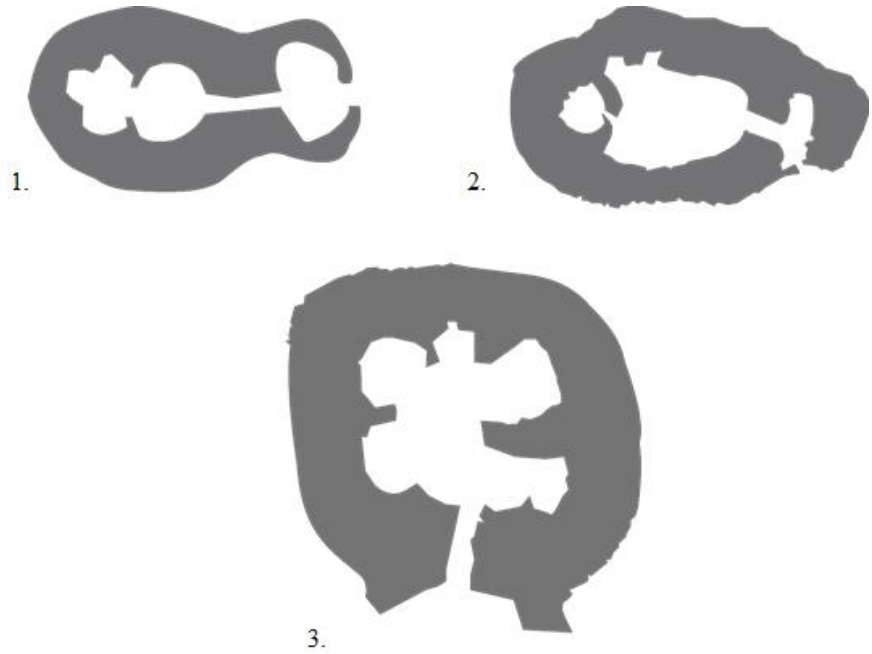

Figure 6.2: *House sites in Shetland (not to scale):*

Key: ***1.*** *Yoxie, Mainland,* ***2.*** *Stanydale House (SFI11), Mainland,* ***3.*** *Punds Water II, Mainland (after Calder 1958: Fig 1, 1965: Fig. 1 & Calder 1963: Fig 2)*

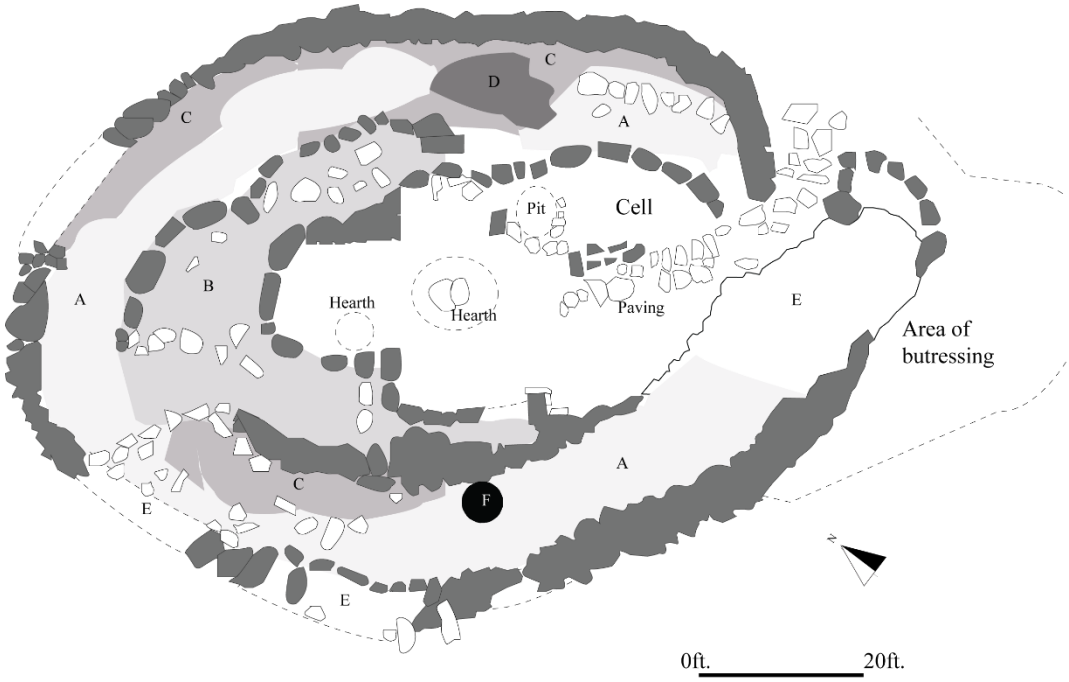

Figure 6.3: *Simplified plan of H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (after Calder 1958):*

Key: ***A.*** *Peat ash core,* ***B.*** *Black earth core,* ***C.*** *Fine brown soil,* ***D.*** *Debris & Soil,* ***E.*** *Conjectural,* ***F.*** *Grain Cache.*

For details of peat ash in outer wall see Fig. 6.5, for details of hearths see Fig. 6.6. See also Fig. B3.2 for details of contexts recorded by Calder

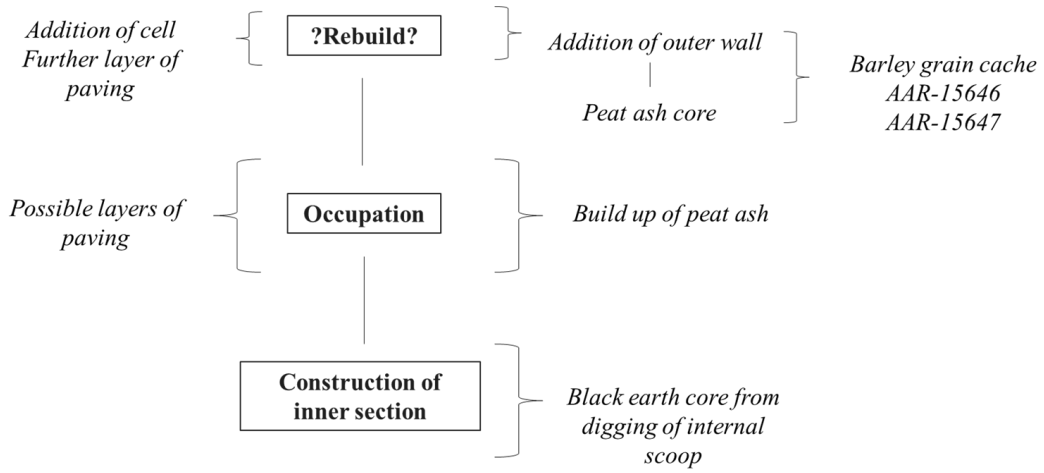

Figure 6.4: *Proposed phasing for H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland, see Fig. 6.28 for dating of grain cache. See also Fig. B3.2 for details of contexts recorded by Calder*

Figure 6.5: *Section through peat ash in outer wall of H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1222688)*

Figure 6.6: *Central hearth and second hearth to rear at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland. The quern was found next to the barley cache in the outer circuit (see Fig. 6.3)*

Mainland of Shetland include H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Stanydale Temple (SFI12) and Scord of Brouster (SFI9). As discussed in the preceding chapter, several sherds from H2 Scord of Brouster(SFI9) could date to the later 3rd millennium (**Section 5.3.1**). This includes a single comb-impressed sherd, probably related to Phase 3, following the decay of H2, and V5 (*cf.* Whittle *et al.* 1986) (Fig. 5.24). As discussed in **Section 5.3.1**, interpreting the chronology of these sherds is hampered by the indeterminate nature of the stratigraphy. House 3 is likely to date to the 2nd millennium BC, but no pottery was recorded from the structure (Whittle *et al.*1986). The cord-impressed sherds from Stanydale Temple (SFI12) relate to later phases following the abandonment of the structure and are discussed further here alongside the later sherds from the Scord of Brouster (SFI9).

In **Chapter 5** I suggested that H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), like other Shetland sites, incorporates several phases, based on the possible use of older occupation deposits. These could range from small modifications to large scale rebuilding (Fig. 6.4). Although Calder's report is unclear regarding the stratigraphy, it appears that within the interior there are several additions including the cell, two layers of paving, and possible multiple hearth deposits (Fig. 6.3) (*cf.* **App. B3.4** see also Fig. B3.2). Around the central hearth, peat ash was recorded to a depth of *c.* 10cm (Calder 1958: 350)[1]. This pattern of activity is reminiscent of that recorded in H1 Scord of Brouster (SFI9) where deposits of peat ash were recorded from the interior (Whittle *et al.* 1986: 23). Parallels between the two sites are furthered by similarities in their internal arrangement and alignment. This could imply that both structures are broadly contemporary. The outer wall of H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), could be a later addition, being added to stabilise the structure[2]. Evidence of further reinforcing can be seen at the east end where stones were piled up against the wall (Fig. 6.3). This wall was filled with quantities of peat ash rather than the black earth used in the internal structure (Calder 1958: 352) (Figs. 6.3 & 6.6). The dating of the grain cache, from under this circuit, suggests remodelling or construction *c* 2280-2030 cal BC (AAR-15646) or *c.* 2150-1940 cal BC (AAR-15647) (**App. F1**) (Fig. 6.32). The material used in the wall core could derive from pre-existing occupation deposits that were piled close to the house or brought from nearby heaps of occupation refuse (**App. B3.4**). Similar episodes of expansion are documented at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) (Downes 2000b: 125). Here, occupation deposits were dumped alongside the walls, which were later revetted (Downes & Lamb 2000b: 29). Similar phases of construction are recorded

[1] *The ash from these deposits was "buff to red but an accumulation on the hearth in the apse was deep red in tone" (Calder 1952: 350).*
[2] *An alternative hypothesis could involve the walls being rebuilt to better support the weight of the roof of the structure*

in Orkney. At Barnhouse large quantities of ash, containing numerous sherds of Grooved Ware were heaped against the outer wall of H2 (Richards, C. 2005: 154)[3]. At the Ness of Brodgar (ORK10) large quantities of midden were used in the backfilling and levelling of areas of the site (Scholma-Mason pers obv.)

Following this argument, the possibility of a single-phase assemblage at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) seems unlikely. The material contained in the outer wall core could incorporate occupation refuse from earlier periods, comprising peat ash from earlier hearths, and/ or periods contemporary with the grain cache, alongside numerous sherds of pottery. Given the relatively unabraded condition of the assemblage it does not appear that this material had been greatly disturbed prior to its use in the wall core. The subsequent distribution of this material within the core (and later post abandonment disturbance) has created a situation where joining sherds for various vessels are found in different contexts (see **App. B3.5**). Little further information regarding patterns of deposition was noted by Calder, but it seems, as with other houses, that a variety of post-depositional processes were at play. Over time, these could have

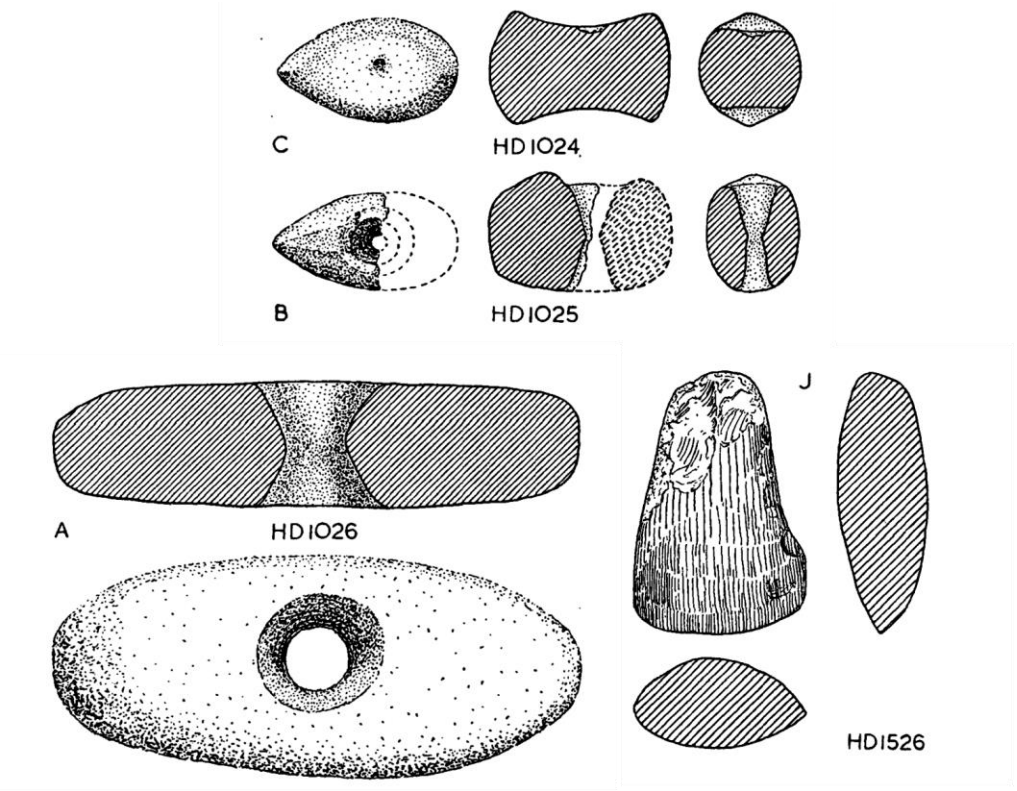

Figure 6.7: *Stone axes from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (Calder 1958: fig 19)*

[3] *These deposits could have been employed in nearby fields as part of wider agricultural regimes (Dockrill & Bond 2009: 43).*

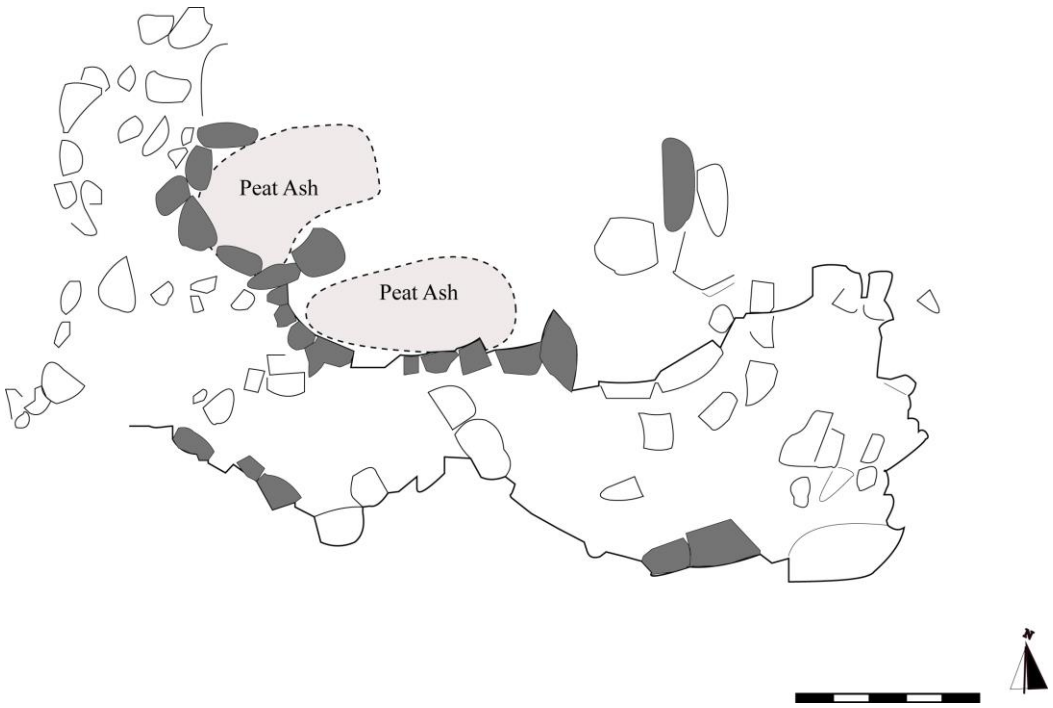

Figure 6.8: *Plan of the Pund of Burland (SFI8), Trondra (after Henderson 1973)*

created an assemblage that "*superficially appears even and homogenous*" (Sørenson 1996: 73). It is unclear how much older some of the pottery is, but it could overlap with P2 H1 Scord of Brouster (SFI9), or the slightly later structure at Stanydale House (SFI11) which bears some morphological similarity (Fig 6.24). I suggested in **Section 5.3.1** that some sherds from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), could be as early as those from the Scord of Brouster (SFI9), including examples of vessels with applied or raised ribs (Fig. 5.21). One alternative hypothesis is that the assemblage could extend backwards by a century, overlapping with the initial development of Beaker pottery in the region (Sheridan 2013: 64). Additionally, there are several artefacts, including the miniature battle axes[4] that post-date the grain cache, extending the site chronology to the 19th century BC, based on parallels with dated axes at Doune, Perthshire (Sheridan 2012a: 28) (Fig. 6.7). In summary, the site could have been occupied over a lengthy period, with multiple phases of occupation and construction akin to that observed at other Shetland sites, and to the south in Orkney and the Hebrides (**Sections 2.5.1** & **5.2.1**). As argued in the case of machair sites in the Hebrides, this could indicate seasonal patterns of occupation, accounting for the various phases of rebuilding.

[4] *One axe (HD1024) was found on top of the second layer of paving in the interior (no 5 on Calder 1952 Fig. 5), the second example (HD1024) derived from between the hearth and opening to apse (no. 4 on Calder 1958: Fig. 5). The large axe head (HD1026) appears to derive from on top of the peat ash and could have been deposited later.*

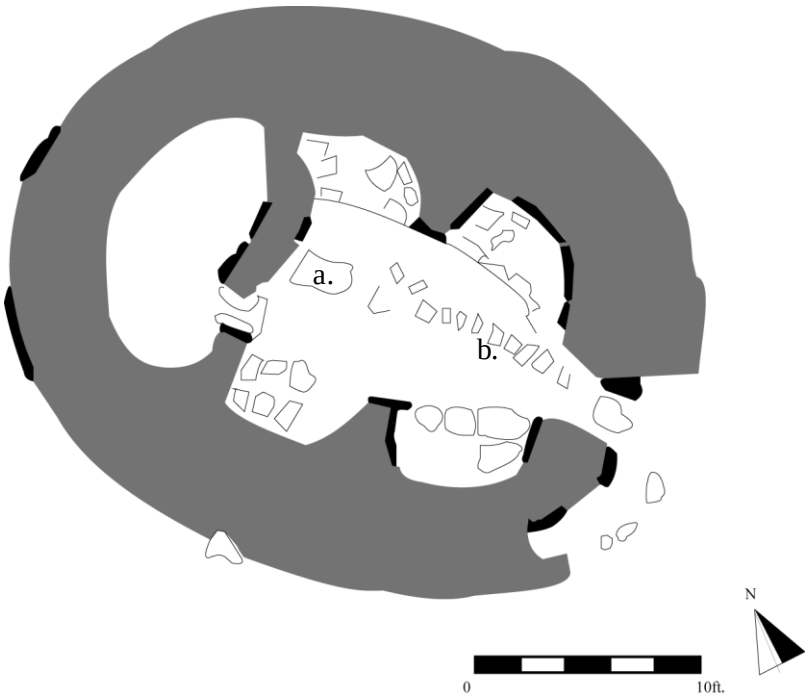

Figure 6.9: *Structure at Wiltrow (SFI15), Mainland (after Curle 1936)*

Key: ***a.*** *Hearth* ***b.*** *Drain*

Moving from the west Mainland, other 3rd millennium sites are recorded to the south, including the unpublished site at the Pund of Burland (SFI8)[5]. Comprising only the southern arc of the building (Fig. 6.8), the shape and internal arrangement is comparable to Punds Water II but lacks internal benches (Calder 1965: 40-5). Both structures have a small stone setting/ hearth at the west end (Fig. 6.8, 6.2.3). At the Pund of Burland (SFI8) the hearth is built atop existing ash spreads, indicating possible earlier activity (Fig. 6.8). The resemblance between the two sites extends to similarities in vessel form (see below). Whilst Punds Water II was initially interpreted as a 'tomb' by Calder (1965: 40), Henshall suggested that the building was domestic in function (1972: 592). The precise function of both sites is unclear, but they could represent a variation on domestic architecture, the form having semblance to other known house sites. In the case of the Pund of Burland (SFI8) there is possible evidence for a funerary use of the structure (**Section 6.2.8**).

At Wiltrow (SFI15) and Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) later activity had largely destroyed the evidence for earlier phases. Pottery was recovered from a series of contexts dating to the

[5] *The site was excavated in the 1960s, and a short notice was published in Discovery and Excavation Scotland (Goodlad, 1964, 1965, 1966; Henderson 1973), but the finds and site lack a detailed report. An analysis of the finds and sites is given in* ***App. B3.10****.*

Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age (Curle 1936). A similar situation is noted at Jarlshof, Mainland, where evidence for earlier activity is obscured by later Prehistoric activity (Hamilton, J. 1956: 8)[6]. At Wiltrow (SFI15), an Iron Age smeltery was constructed over earlier remains, with 3rd millennium pottery intermixed in Iron Age deposits[7]. The form of the dwelling north of the smeltery is reminiscent of early structures at Jarlshof (Curle 1936: 158; *cf.* Hamilton, J. 1956). Orientated NE/ SE the interior of the structure has four recesses and a circular cell at the rear[8] (Fig. 6.9). The arrangement of the recesses is comparable to Punds Water II. A single hearth, formed from a flagstone, was recorded in front of the later partition wall, with a drain running from it to the entrance (Curle 1936: 160) (Fig. 6.9). Early activity at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) consisted of evidence of cultivation under the South House and a timber structure under the North House (Downes & Lamb 2000b: 8-10) (Fig. 6.10). Further examples of timber structures preceding stone-built ones have been recorded across Shetland. These include the Bronze Age (post-1800 BC) timber structure at Kebister (Owen & Lowe 1999: 253, 256)[9] and the Scord of Brouster. Timber posts are documented at the house near Gruting School (SFI7) and Stanydale Temple (SFI12). Whilst substantial, the bulk of the ceramic material from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) belongs to periods later than that under study. Early pottery was recorded in Phase 2 (P2), whilst further sherds were found in Phases 9 (P9) and 10 (P10) due to cultural and natural processes (Downes 2000c: 61).

Other sites of the period include the Ness of Gruting Workshop (SFI5). This small collection of finds could derive from a site discussed by Calder, near House III at the Ness of Gruting (1956: 375). There is little further information about the nature and location of the site, but the description of the finds matches those in the museum (see **App. B3.7**). From Cols Ness (SFI1) a single rim sherd was recovered from an eroding structure, but the precise nature of the site is unclear.

The final category of evidence comprises the numerous burnt mounds found across Shetland and Fair Isle. Around 300 examples are known, and form one of the more recognisable monument types in Fair Isle (Hunter, J. 1996: 57). Few have been examined in detail, but

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[6] From Jarlshof early finds include the previously discussed late 4th/ early 3rd millennium round bottomed pottery from MIII, found with a Skaill knife and other bone implements Hamilton, J. 1956: Fig. 5, Fig. 6). From the later MII came an enigmatic bone object (discussed below) and further bone implements (ibid., Fig. 8). Pottery was rare, though decorated examples included incised sherds.
[7] The bulk of the assemblage derived from the smeltery with several sherds encrusted with slag
[8] The interior of the rear chamber was covered with numerous flat stones which were suggested by Curle to represent the remains of a tiled roof (1936:159). Similar tiled roofs have been recently recorded from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11) (Towers et al. 2015).
[9] The early phases of Kebister, Mainland were associated with a group of steatite tempered sherds probably of Bronze Age date (Dalland & MacSween 1999: 178)

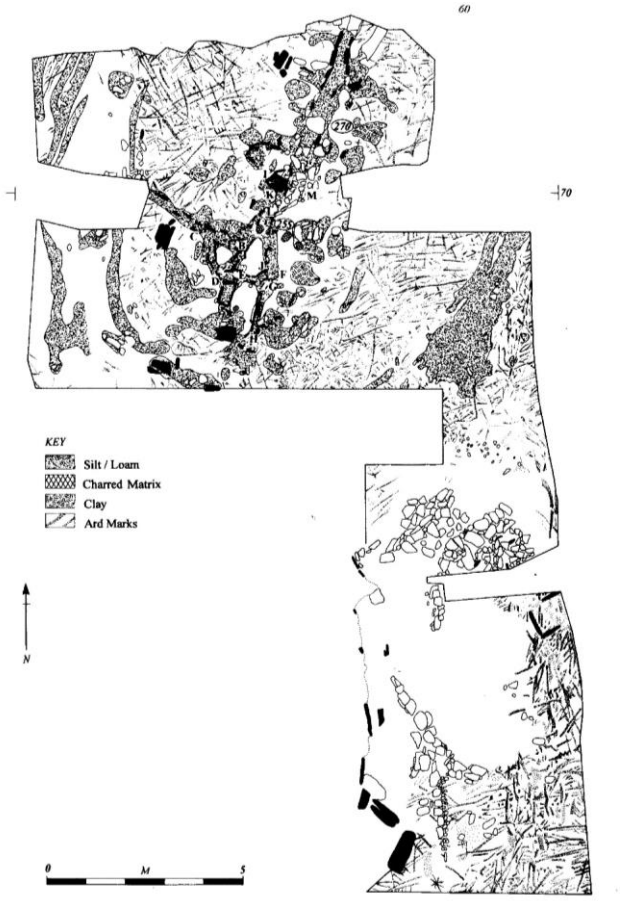

Figure 6.10: *Phase 1 & 2 Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), Mainland (Downes & Lamb 2000: Fig. 4)*

excavated examples have produced dates ranging from the mid-3rd millennium BC to the Norse period (Anthony 2003: 65). Several burnt mounds have evidence for associated buildings. These include the structures in Orkney at Liddle and Beaquoy (Hedges 1977), and in Shetland at Cruester (Moore & Wilson 2014) and Tougs of Burra (SFI14) (Hedges 1986). The pottery from the latter site is included in the following discussion of domestic material.

6.2.2 H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5)

The Assemblage

Four assemblages from the Gruting area were re-examined, including the large collection from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) (Fig. 6.11). 1212 sherds of pottery were recovered from the site. Due to the fragmentary nature of the assemblage determining the precise number of vessels was difficult. Re-examination of the assemblage suggests a minimum of 246 vessels, only 22% (56 ENV) of these could be assigned a form (**App. B3.5**, Table B3.5). Forms comprised an

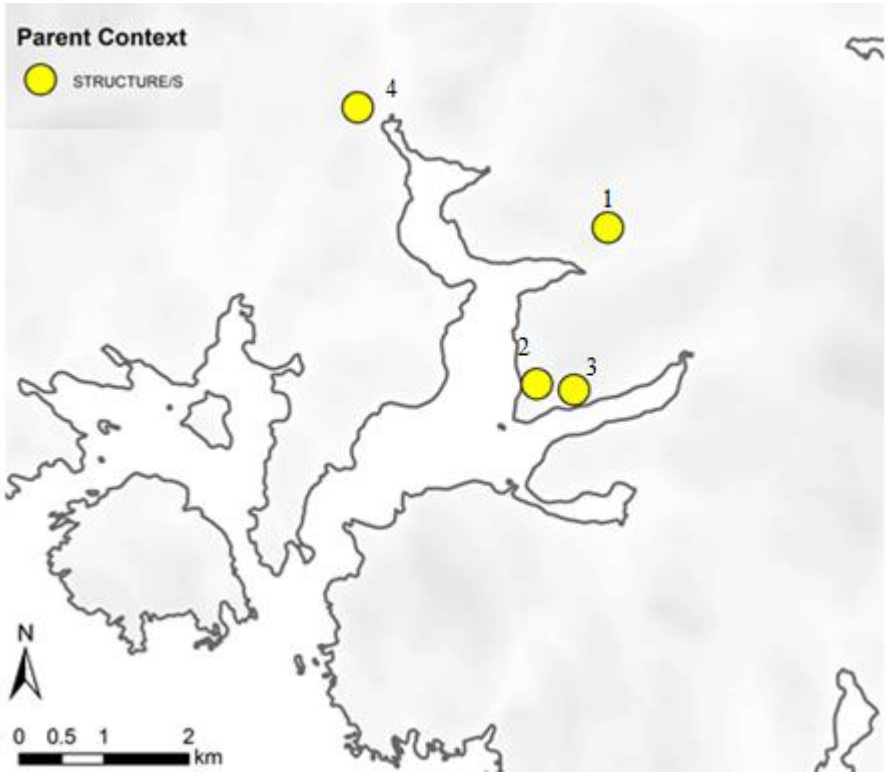

Figure 6.11: *Sites in the Sandsting region discussed in text:*

Key: ***1.*** *Stanydale Temple (SFI12) & Stanydale House (SFI11)* ***2.*** *Ness of Gruting Workshop (SFI6))* ***3.*** *H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) & Gruting School (SFI7)* ***4.*** *Scord of Brouster (SFI9)*

eclectic range of Beakers, bucket/ tub vessels and a suite of regional/ site specific forms (Fig. 6.12) (Table 6.2) (**App. B3.5**). Sherds were recovered from multiple contexts, with joins noted across contexts. Large groups of vessels were recorded from 1953/ 1 (ENV 40), 1952/ 5 (ENV 31) and 1953/ 2 (ENV 25), representing deposits from the interior and wall core (**App. B3.5**) (Figs. 6.13 & B3.2). It was from these contexts that the bulk of the pottery was recovered.

Bucket/ tub vessels accounted for the bulk of the assemblage with at least 23 vessels recorded (Fig. 6.14). Bucket/ tub vessels are predominantly wall sherds, but several rims were noted (**App. B3.5**). These frequently have rounded, pointed, or bevelled rims. Internal rim diameters ranged from 120-280mm, with five having rim diameters over 200mm (**App. B3.5**). Both HD918 and HD1337 have the largest rim diameters of the group, at 260 and 280mm respectively, but the indeterminate vessel HD925 was estimated by Henshall to have a rim diameter of *c.* 381mm (15 inches) (1958: 384). Bucket/ tub vessels tend to have straight walls, sometimes slightly curved (*i.e.* HD1338. HD1338 and HD918), and are likely to have flat bases, although no bases could be attributed to the vessels. Wall thickness ranged from 6-13mm. The exact height and profiles of the vessels could not be ascertained. Fabrics tended to

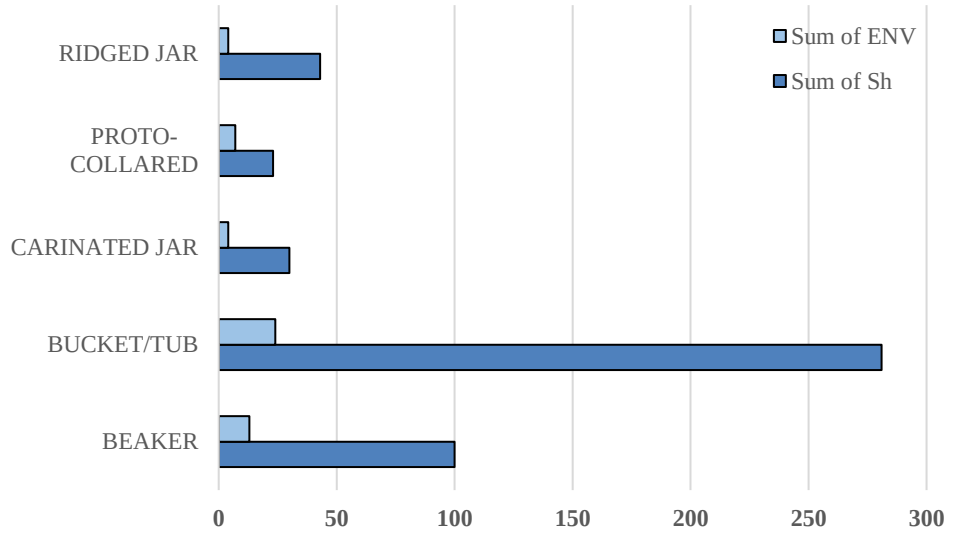

Figure 6.12: *Principal form groups at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (see Table 6.2 for form definitions, see also Table B3.5)*

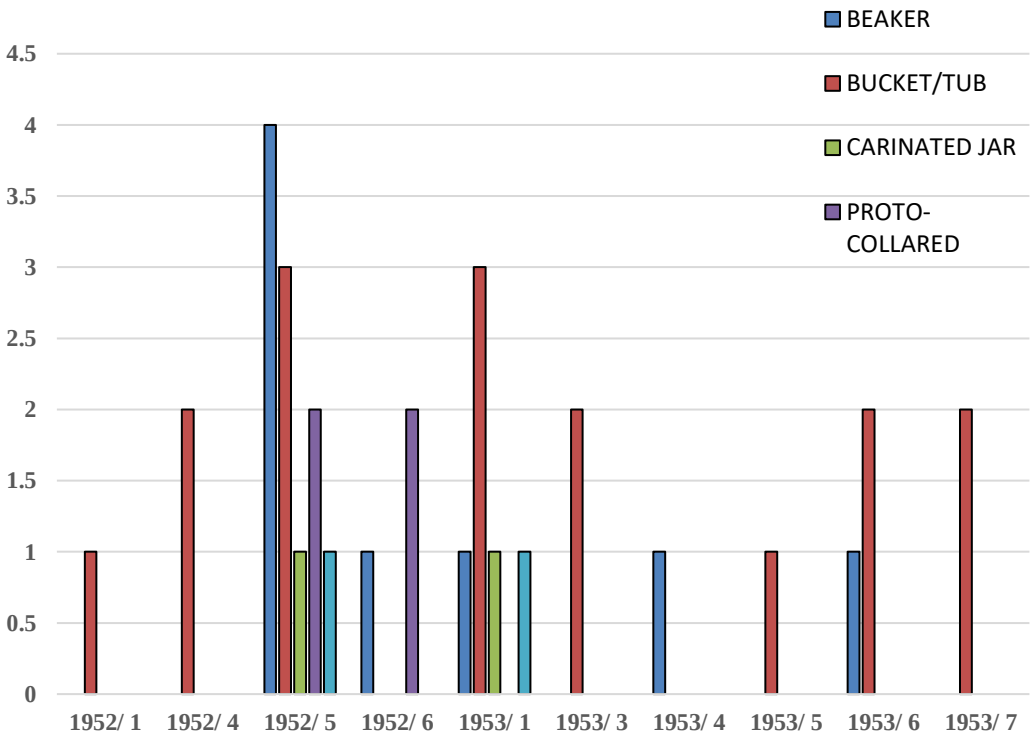

Figure 6.13: *Distribution of pottery by primary context at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (see Fig. B3.2 for details of contexts and locations, see Table 6.2 for form definitions)*

Form	Key Characteristics	Decoration
Bowl	• Simple rims and rounded profiles	• Undecorated – one example of incision
Carinated jar	• Indet. form – defined on basis of carination in shoulder • RD: 240-266mm	• Cordons and diagonal incisions
Proto-collared (Fig. 6.17)	• Relatively sinuous forms • Distinct groove between neck and body • Groove ranges from shallow to pronounced • Area between neck and body undecorated • Area above neck and below shoulder decorated • Incised – chevron motifs common • RD: 120-220mm • Collar depth *c.*53-83mm	• Incision often restricted to collar • Comb impressions
Ridged jar (Fig.6.16)	• Bucket/ tub forms, but can have slightly sinuous profile • Rims range from rounded to internally bevelled • RD 240-266mm	• Multiple cordons dividing decoration into series of zones • Decoration primarily by incision

Table 6.2: *Site specific forms H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (see* ***App. B3.5*** *for details)*

be sandy or coarse rock-tempered (Table B3.4). Decoration is principally by incision. HD944 sports ill-defined vertical herringbone motifs, which also occur on Beakers in the assemblage, implying a degree of chronological and/ or design overlap. HD945 is decorated with applied vertical cordons, creating panels infilled with diagonal incisions. The use of cordons to create zones is seen also on HD1468, which features a horizontal and vertical set of cordons, creating an upside-down T-shape. Cordons were frequently noted just below the rim as in HD1374, HD1370 and HD1371 (Fig. 6.14).

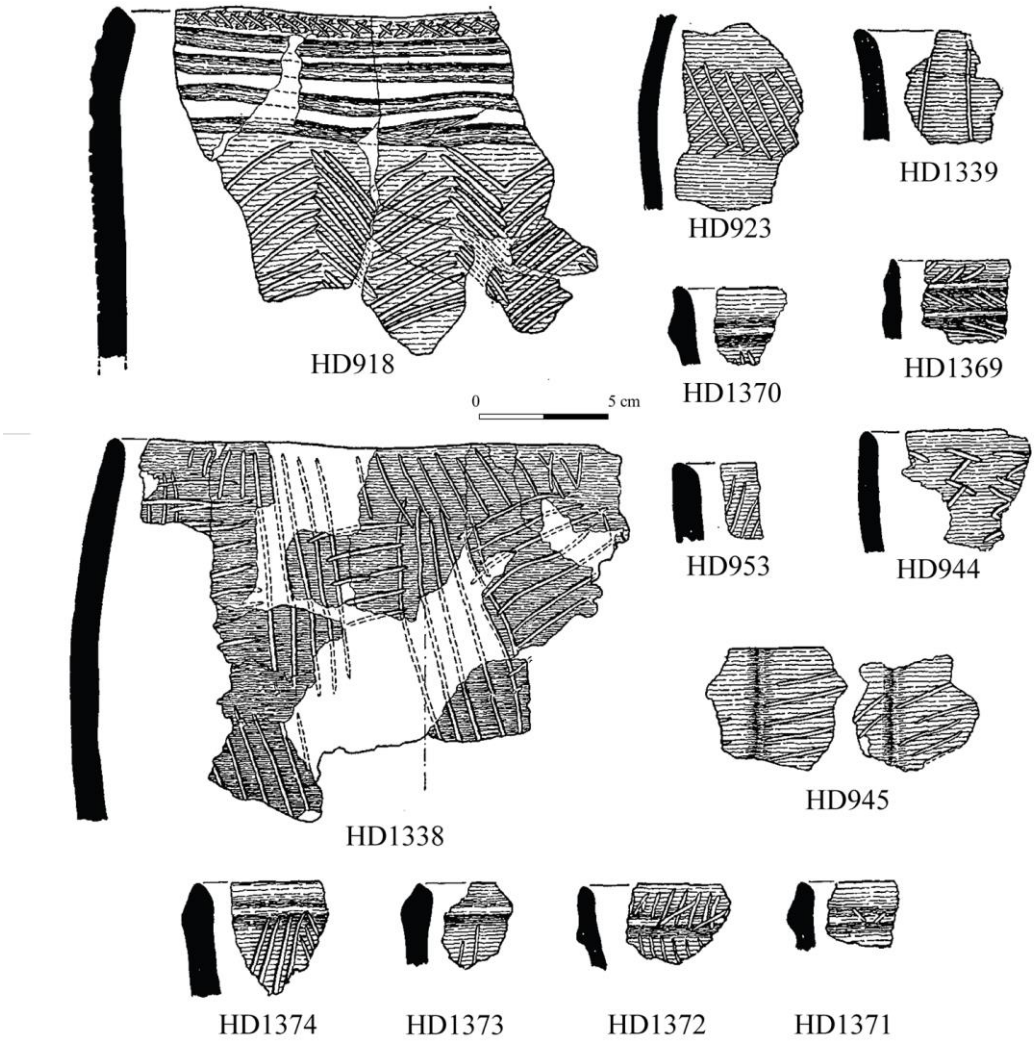

Figure 6.14: *Bucket/ tub Vessels, H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (after Calder 1958)*

Beakers form 23% of the ENV (*n.*.13) but given the overlap with the range of regional forms defined here this number is tentative[10]. Vessels like bucket/ tub forms showed a preference for sandy fabrics, although at least three vessels were rock tempered (Fig. 6.20, see also Fig. B3.3). Wall sherds were common, with gentle rounded profiles, but no forms could be attributed except for a single weak s-profile Beaker, HD938. Beakers tended to have rim diameters of 100-140 mm. One outlier, HD1340, had a diameter over 200mm (**App. B3.5**). The upper half of the vessel has a collar-like appearance, owing to the wide groove at the junction of the neck and rounded body. On this basis, the vessel could be assigned to the proto-collared group (see below). Evidence for coil-building was noted in this example. HD938 is an unusual example of a Beaker, whilst having a sinuous profile, the vessel sports a wide base giving it a 'baggy'

[10] *As with the proto-collared, ridged vases and carinated vase, the bulk of the Beakers appear to derive from 1952/ 5 associated with the main peat ash (**App. B3.5**).*

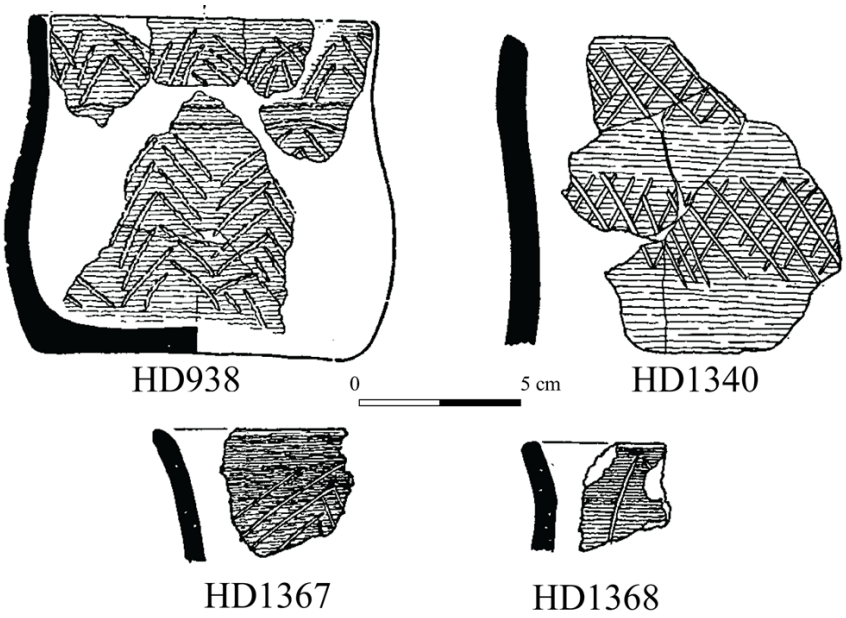

Figure 6.15: *Beakers, H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (after Calder 1958)*

appearance (Fig. 6.15). The rim is straight and slightly rounded, and the body is decorated with a series of comb-impressed chevrons. The decoration is split into two zones using parallel horizontal lines. The remaining examples of Beakers include the rim sherds HD1367 and HD1368, although these are tentative examples. Both are decorated by incision, which formed the primary decorative technique of the group (Fig. B3.4).

Three regional forms were noted among the assemblage, comprising ridged jars, carinated jars and proto-collared vessels (Table 6.2). Alongside these are a range of fragmentary vessels that could not be assigned to a specific group (**App. B3.5**). Carinated jars are overall undiagnostic, with no complete profiles. Vessels were defined primarily on the presence of a sharp carination (Table 6.2). Of the four recorded examples only one rim was noted - HD997, with a diameter of 180mm. In two cases, vessels were decorated with cordons, whilst diagonal incisions were more common. These vessels could overlap in part with the ridged-jars which were similarly defined by applied cordons (Table 6.2). Four examples of ridged vessels were recorded, including the distinct vessel HD916 (Fig. 6.16). HD916 is unusual in having an elongate body, with a roughly sinuous profile. The zone between the upper and lower ridge can be described as a shallow cavetto. The vessel is one of the largest from the assemblage, with a rim diameter of *c*. 266mm and a wall thickness of 14mm. HD1337 is of similar form, with a series of horizontal ribs and shallow curved zones and a rim diameter of 240mm. Two further thick-walled ribbed vessels, HD917 and HD957 were assigned to this group (**App. B3.5**).

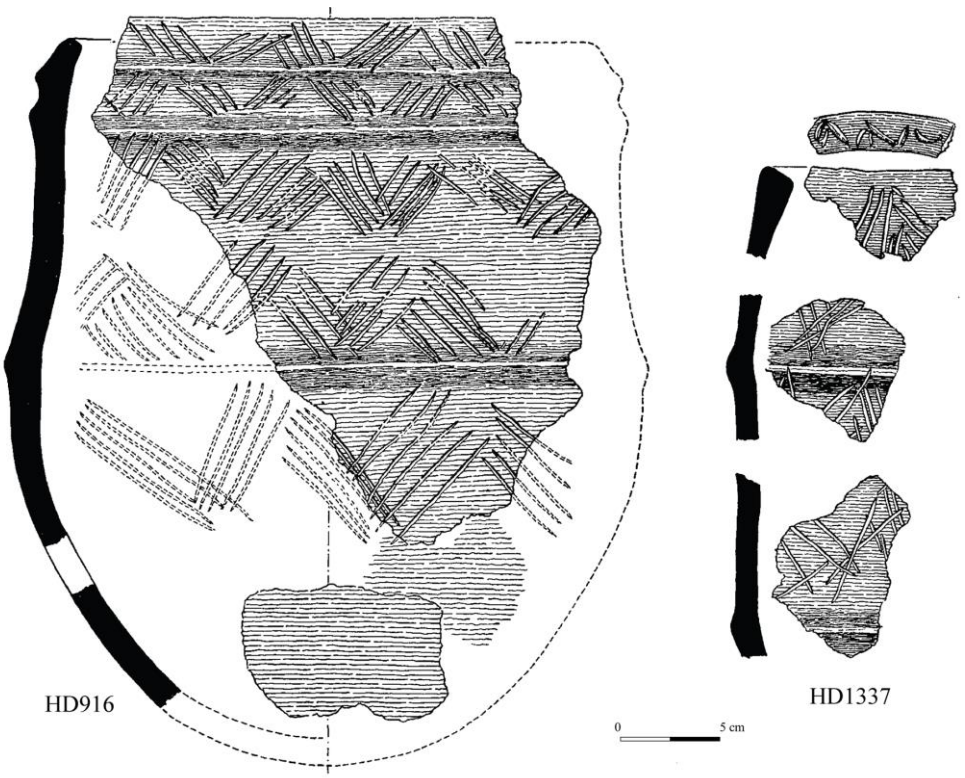

Figure 6.16: *Ridged jars H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (after Calder 1958)*

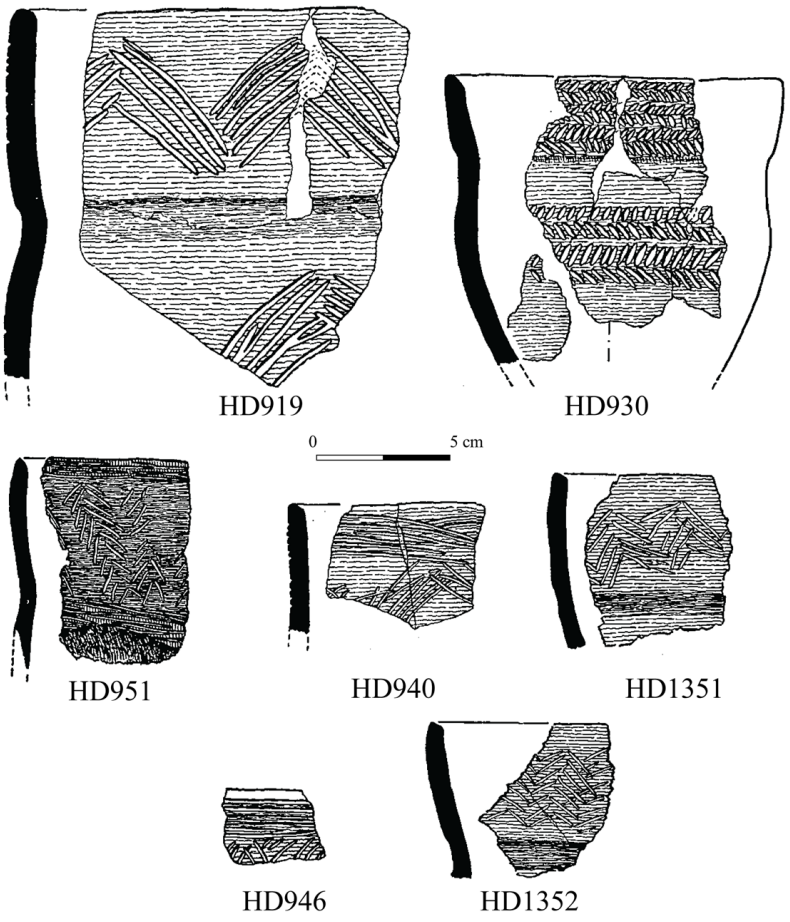

Figure 6.17: *Proto-collared vessels H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (after Calder 1958)*

HD916 was compared by Henshall to round-bottomed 'baggy jars' from the Hebrides. Whilst the form is outwardly similar, the nature of the decoration is not typical of the type (M. Copper pers. comm.). Instead, the vessel could be flat-bottomed (A. Sheridan pers. comm.), suggesting a sinuous vessel with a pronounced belly and narrow base (Fig. 6.16)[11]. This could represent a blending of elements of bucket/ tub vessels and Beakers. A similar process of blending can be seen in the distinctive Rockbarton type in Ireland (*cf.* Case 1961). These comprise an eclectic mix of vessels ranging from sinuous types to bucket/ tub forms (*ibid.*; Case 1993: 248-51; Grogan & Roche 2010: 36). Examples of Rockbarton pots have also been linked to potbeakers (N. Carlin pers. comm.; Grogan & Roche 2010: Illus. 7). Further parallel for these ridged vessels can be found in the Western Isles. This includes examples from Dalmore, which has an internally bevelled rim and is decorated with incised chevrons (Fig. 2.34). The internal decoration of rim HD1337 recalls the decoration of rims at Northton (Fig. 2.31)

The final group at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) are a loose collection of proto-collared vessels (*n.*7) (Fig. 6.17). These overlap in part with Beakers in having relatively sinuous forms but are further defined by a distinct groove between the neck and body (Table 6.1). This groove is ranges from shallow to more pronounced creating a set of collar-like forms[12]. Flattened forms include HD919, 951a and 1352, whilst examples with more pronounced distinctions include HD930. The space between the neck and body is typically undecorated while the areas above and below are decorated. Incised chevrons are common, but HD930 sports two bands of herringbone motif and HD951 sports an unusual vertical chevron pattern combining comb impressions and incision. Wall thickness across the group ranges from 6.35-8.89mm, with rim diameters between 120-160mm, with a single outlier HD919 measuring 220mm. These were predominantly found in the main peat ash, and the peat ash north of the grain cache (1952/ 5 and 1952/ 6) (Fig. 6.3), suggesting that they form a distinct chronological group (**App. B3.5**). Among the undiagnostic material is a series of sherds, HD941, decorated with three horizontal incisions, with a series of short incisions below, creating a stitching effect (Fig. 6.18). A similar mode of decoration was noted on a pot from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK10) (R. Towers pers. comm.) (Fig. 6.19). This vessel could be a skeuomorph of a leather vessel with the short incisions representing stitching.

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[11] A similar misconception occurred with the analysis of vessels from Kilellan Farm, which were interpreted by Burgess as tall round-based jars (1976: 200). This view was later repeated by Gibson, A. & Woods (1990: 190). See Cowie, R. 2005: 73

[12] Distinct grooving between the neck and rim of vessels can be seen on other domestic vessels of the period, including the distinct vessel from Moneen, Ireland (Case 1993: Fig. 5) and those from the Western Isles

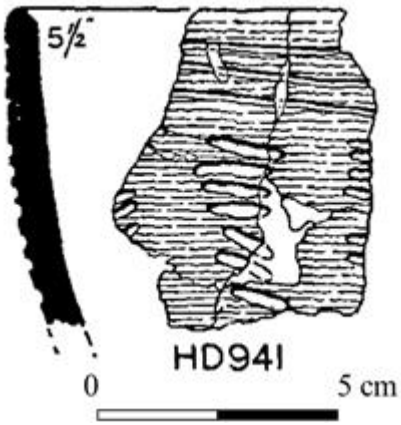

Figure 6.18: *Possible stitching effect on vessel HD941 from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (after Calder 1958)*

Figure 6.19: *Possible skeuomorphic vessel from Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Mainland, Orkney (not to scale) (©ORCA)*

Ceramic repertoire and use

Discussion of putative function is hampered by uncertainties regarding whether the assemblage is single or multi-phase. The assemblage can be broadly divided into three groups comprising large, medium and small vessels (Table 6.3). Large vessels encompass those with wall thickness of 13-30mm (Table 6.3). Rim diameters were limited to only one example, HD916 measuring 266mm. The only defined forms among the large vessels were two examples of ridged jars in coarse rock-tempered fabrics. Similar thick-walled coarse tempered

Vessel Category	Fabric	Size
Large	COAR1, COAR2, SAND2, SAND4, SAND5	Wall thickness: 13-30mm 266
Medium	COAR1, COAR2, SAND 1, SAND2, SAND3, SAND4, STEAT	Wall thickness: 8-13mm Rim dimeters 100-381mm
Small	SAND1, SAND2, SAND4	Wall thickness: 3-7mm Rim diameters 80-240

Table 6.3: *Vessel sizes based on wall thickness and rim diameter from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (for definition of fabrics see **App. B3.5**)*

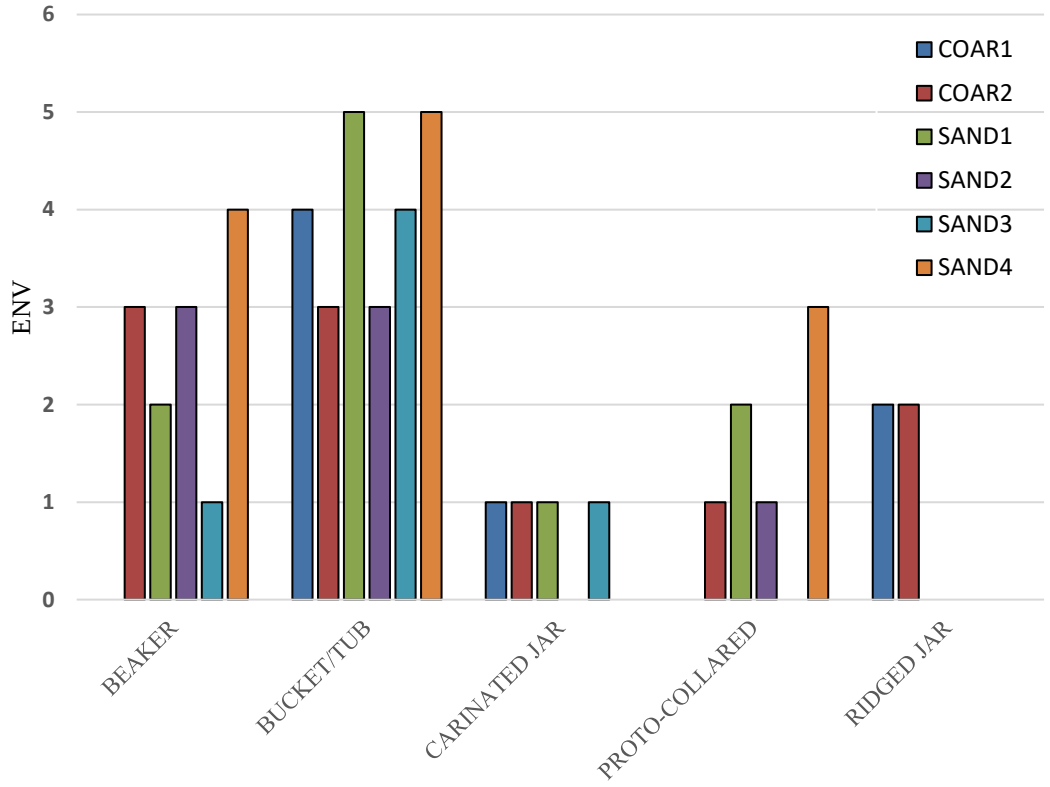

Figure 6.20: *Fabrics and vessel forms at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), Mainland (For definition of fabrics see **App. B3.5**)*

sherds have been documented at other sites in Shetland. Similar fabrics, albeit with steatite fragments, were recorded at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) (Yarrington unpub.), in association with the cordon-decorated sherds 404 and 147 (Fig.5.21). The large vessels at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) can be envisaged as fulfilling a range of storage roles, likely overlapping with medium sized vessels, which probably performed a range of functions. Within this group it

may be useful to see a distinction between the upper size range, with vessels with wall thicknesses of 10-12mm and rim diameters of 200-280mm as closely overlapping with the 'large size' category. Proto-collared vessels likely fulfilled storage roles. The collars of proto-collared vessels may, as suggested by Longworth for Collared Urns, have aided in tying covers over the vessel (1984: 6, 47). Bucket/ tub vessels were deployed in a range of capacities, from storage to serving and preparation roles. Beakers tended to fall into the smaller-size category, implying serving roles, although larger examples could have been used in the storage and preparation of foodstuffs.

Regarding fabric, no clear relationship between size and function could be established, although COAR2 was primarily associated with large vessels. The sand-based fabrics were associated with small to medium vessels, including Beakers and bucket/ tub vessels (Fig. 6.20). Taking these observations together, the composition of the H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) assemblage closely matches that seen at other domestic sites from Britain (**Section 2.5.2**), with a suite of different vessels in use, suited to a range of roles.

Discussion

Whilst representing one of the largest assemblages from the region, determining trends within the material is difficult. One of the key aspects of the assemblage is the apparent diversity of vessel types, which include a suite of regionally specific forms. Among these are proto-collared vessels, which closely overlap with sinuous Beaker forms. The primary difference lies in the development of the neck into a collar like form. Decoration on these vessels is confined to the neck, with the groove below left blank, and further decorative zones below this. Similar zoned decoration is found on Beakers, but due to fragmentation, reconstructing the overall decorative schemes of proto-collared vessels were hard to reconstruct. Across all the form groups, stacked or multiple chevrons were preferred. Bucket/ tub vessels, however, showed potentially more mixed schemes, including the use of cordons to create panels. The use of cordons closely overlaps with the ridged jars, which in contrast have sinuous profiles. In **Section 5.3.2**, the former was suggested to have an affinity with Grooved Ware to the south, whilst it has been proposed that ridged jars align more closely with domestic assemblages of the late 3rd to early 2nd millennium in the Hebrides. This can be interpreted as either:

- Supporting the notion of different phases within the assemblage, with a mix of 3rd millennium types
- Alternatively, the assemblage could belong to a single phase, drawing on a range of ideas, including aspects associated with Grooved Ware and Beakers.

Most of the forms defined at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) do not occur elsewhere and clearly contrast with the cord-impressed assemblages form other parts of the archipelago. Whilst this could be related to site specific choices, one other possibility is that this reflects on temporal differences. In this regard, the absence of twisted cord and deeply bevelled rims akin to those from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) could be cited as evidence of H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) containing earlier pottery than Sumburgh Airport (SFI13). The cordon decorated sherds from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) could be contemporary with the cordon decorated ridged jars. In terms of form and fabric there are clear similarities between these two groups. These issues of morphology and chronology will be returned to in **Section 6.2.11**.

6.2.3 Ness of Gruting Workshop (SFI6)

The Assemblage

From the nearby House III came a smaller collection of sherds, probably of 2nd-1st millennium date (**App. B3.7**) (Fig. 6.21). Near to House III, Calder identified a small 'workshop' from which a small assemblage of pottery was recovered. Whilst the assemblage from the Ness of Gruting Workshop (SFI6) is small – comprising six sherds, representing five or six vessels (**App. B3.7**) - it is comparable to H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). Among the assemblage is a small fragment decorated with three lines of coarse cord impressions and several sherds with deep to light incisions (Fig.6.21). The presence of twisted cord decoration on a single sherd is unusual due to the general absence of this among the primary assemblage at the nearby H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), where combed decoration was employed to create similar patterns. A small assemblage from Gruting School[13] (SFI7) – amounting to four sherds – contained

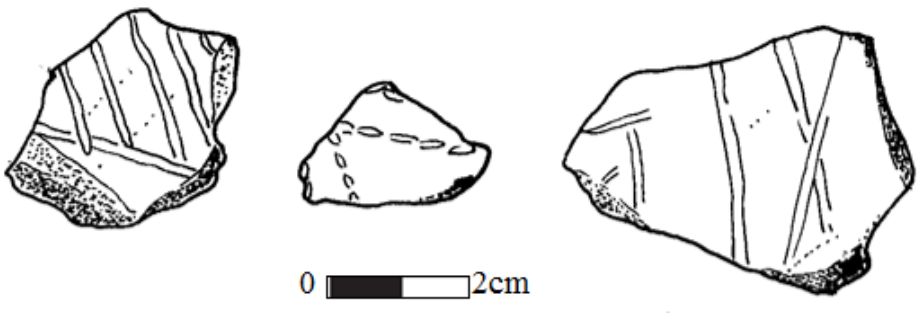

Figure 6.21: *Pottery from Ness of Gruting Workshop (SFI6), Mainland (Author)*

[13] *These appear to have been confused with those from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) (see **App. B3.7**).*

Figure 6.22: *Cord impressed sherd from Stanydale Temple (SFI12), Mainland (© NMS)*

similarly decorated pottery to that from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). This included sherds decorated by incision with chevron or lattice-based motifs (**App. B3.7**).

Discussion

Little else can be stated regarding the assemblage given its small size and lack of contextual information. The fabric and decoration of the sherds closely overlap with those at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), suggesting a degree of contemporaneity. It is unclear if as suggested in the case of H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) if the cord impressed sherd indicates a slightly later date for the assemblage.

6.2.4 Stanydale Temple (SFI12)

The Assemblage

As discussed in **Section 5.3.3**, Stanydale Temple (SFI12) encompasses several phases (see **App. B3.2**). These include possible early pottery types from below the peat ash (V1 & V2) (**Section 5.3.3**). The cord impressed sherds (V3) relate to the final phases. These were found in the top of the infill of the west post hole (Table B3.1, Fig. B3.1) (Figs. 6.22 & 6.23). Along with the cord decorated sherds two plain sherds were found. These are probably from the same vessel found in the post hole. The fabric of the sherds in comparison to the rest of the assemblage, was slightly finer, and fired to an orangey colour (**App. B3.2**, see also Table B3.2). The form is undiagnostic and little else can be said about these sherds, although they have in the past been labelled as examples of Beakers (*e.g.* Calder 1952; Clarke, D.L. 1970:

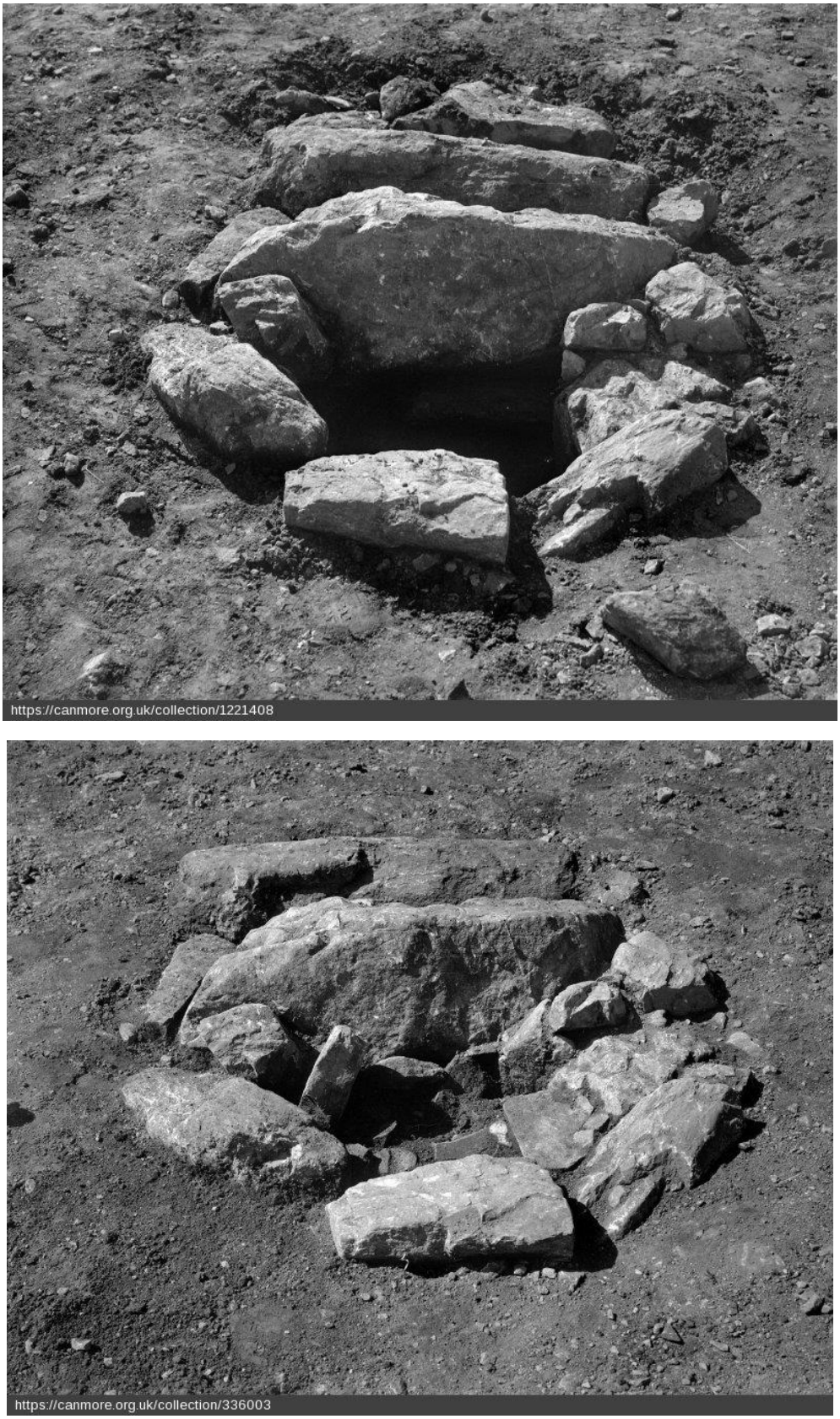

Figure 6.23: *Post holes at Stanydale Temple (SFI12), Mainland. Western posthole (top) contained several cord impressed sherds (https://canmore.org.uk/collection/336003, https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1221408)*

521; Sheridan 2013: 51). As noted, given their fragmentary condition, caution should be expressed in this reconstruction. From within the peat ash on the floor level in recesses 1 and 2 came a carinated/ shouldered jar, V4. The area below the rim and shoulder were decorated with a series of circular impressions arranged in triangles (Fig. 5.31). Similar carinated jars are known from Sumburgh Airport (Jar Type 1) and are suggested to date to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age (Downes 2000c: 40). The motif is unusual, as decoration is rare on later Bronze Age vessels (Scholma-Mason pers. obv; see Murray, J. 2016 for a review of 2nd-1st millennium pottery). The arrangement of the oval impressions in triangles recalls the motifs found among twisted cord sherds at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) (Fig. 6.26) and Pund of Burland (SFI8) (Fig. 6.28). On this basis, it can be tentatively suggested that this sherd is slightly earlier than the Bronze Age examples from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), possibly contemporary with the cord impressed sherds from the post hole. This suggests that the structure was filled sometime in the late 3rd or early 2nd millennium (**App. B3.2**). A single fragment from a bowl, V5 was recovered from the SW corner of recess No. 1, floor level. With a rim diameter of 160mm, the bowl is the only other vessel - along with V1 and V2 – that derived from below the peat ash. The bowl was tempered with steatite, the use of which has been noted at other sites in the 3rd millennium (*cf.* **Chapter 5**).

Discussion

In summary, the pottery from Stanydale Temple (SFI12) could represent several different phases. The earliest of these is represented by V1 and V2. These represent large rock-tempered bucket and tub vessels, probably employed as storage vessels set within the alcove (**Section 5.3.3**). The relatively complete state of V1 suggests that these had not been greatly disturbed. V8, a steatite bowl, could be associated with this phase, being found in the southwest corner of recess No.1. These were sealed by dumps of peat ash, which overlay sealing possibly late 3rd to early 2nd millennium pottery, including the cord impressed sherds from V3 and the impressed sherds from V4. The remaining sherds could relate to further dumping of peat ash and midden material during the 2nd millennium.

The infilling of the structure could be interpreted as a deliberate act. The process of closing or sealing deposits is well attested across Neolithic Europe (*e.g.* Stevanovic 1997; Towers *et al.* 2015), and into the Bronze Age. Evidence for this practice is well attested within the Northern Isles and further afield (Nowakowski 2001). This process of closure could be applied to other Shetland sites, with the process of dumping peat ash not simply being one of waste disposal but part of a careful process of closing houses – either following their abandonment, or, as attested in some ethnographic cases, following the death of an individual (Parker Pearson

1999b; Nowakowski 2001). As a potent place, Stanydale Temple (SFI12) could have been decommissioned in a managed way. As suggested by the burnt timbers, this could have involved the deliberate burning of the structure. Similar burning events are attested at early Neolithic timber halls, including Warren Fields, Aberdeenshire (Fraser 2009: 69). Similar careful and structured closure is seen among the buildings at the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), where Str. 10 is sealed with an extensive cattle bone deposit (Mainland *et al.* 2014). The pottery from the top of the post hole suggest that this decommissioning at Stanydale Temple (SFI12) had likely occurred by the late 3rd or early 2nd millennium BC. These structures could continue to act as focal points for activity over extended periods of time, later material from the site may represent token deposits placed within the peat ash/ midden.

6.2.5 Stanydale House (SFI11)

The Assemblage

There is no discussion of the pottery from Stanydale House (SFI11) (Fig. 6.24) in the original report (Calder 1958), although some stratigraphic information is noted in the NMS Continuation Catalogue[14] (**App. B3.3**). As with other Shetland domestic sites, these 'contexts'

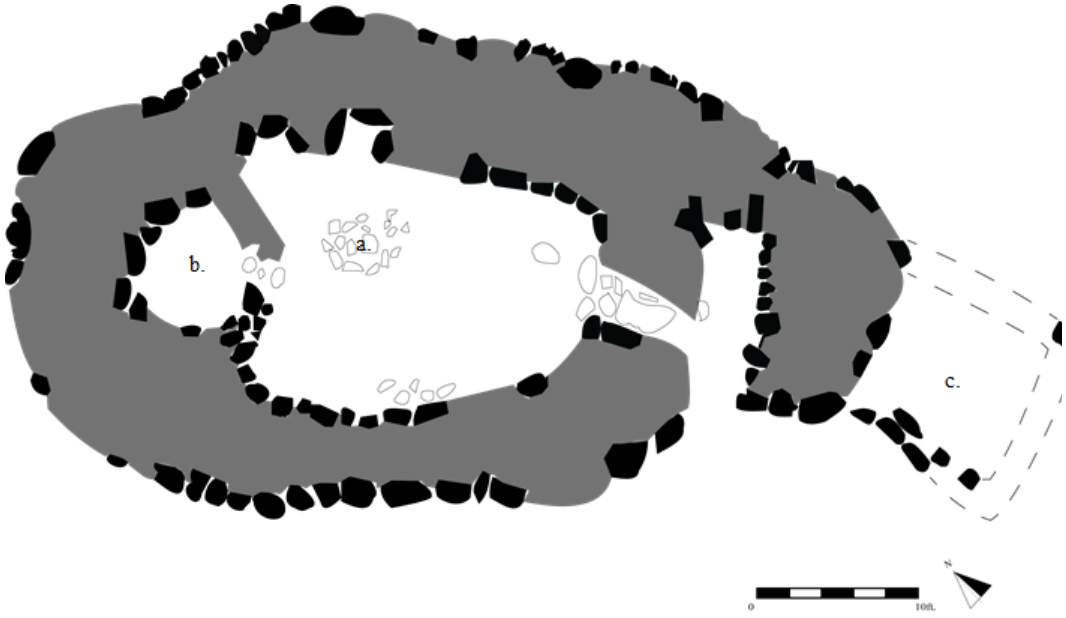

Figure 6.24: *Simplified plan of Stanydale House (after Calder 1958)*

Key: ***a.*** *Hearth,* ***b.*** *Rear recess,* ***c.*** *?Enclosure?*

[14] *Information from the NMS Continuation Catalogue is reproduced here with kind permission from the NMS*

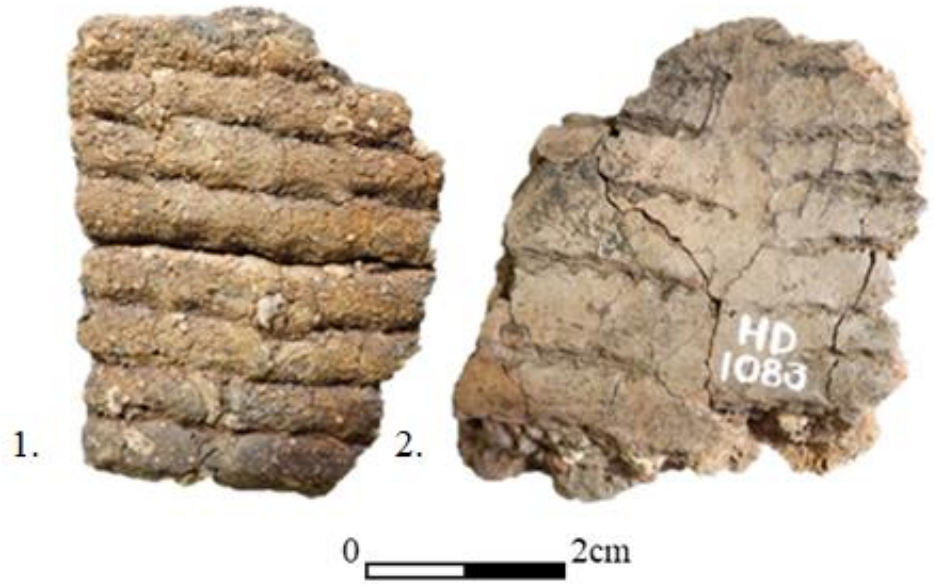

Figure 6.25: *Sherds from Stanydale House (SFI11), Mainland (Author © NMS)*

Key: ***1.*** *Stab and drag,* ***2.*** *Cockle shell impressions*

relate mainly to the wall core and interior (**App. B3.3**). Within the assemblage were several sherds. These included HD1069, decorated with irregular nearly vertical incised grooves, as well as HD1070 and HD1071 with intersecting chevrons. Some sherds derive from over the peat ash, perhaps implying later dumping. The two most significant vessels are HD1083 and HD1082. HD1083 is a buff friable sherd with large grits. The outer surfaces are decorated with a series of cockle shell impressions (Fig. 6.25.2), like those from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Howe, Orkney (ORK7) (Fig. 7.39). HD1082 is decorated using the stab-and-drag method, creating irregular horizontal lines (A Sheridan pers. comm.) (Fig. 6.25.1). These sherds have typically been cited as examples of Beakers, but, as at Stanydale Temple (SFI12), the specifics of their form cannot be deduced due to their fragmentary condition.

Discussion

The assemblage finds parallel with Stanydale Temple (SFI12), and H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). This includes the use of bucket/ tub forms and motifs. As in the case of H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), these could be temporally distinct from the cord-impressed assemblages found in other parts of the archipelago. A single radiocarbon date from Stanydale House (SFI11) supports the notion of some (if not all) of the ceramics from the site belong to the later 3rd millennium (but see below) (Fig. 6.32).

6.2.6 Sumburgh Airport (SFI13)

The Assemblage

Alongside the previously discussed cordoned vessels (Fig. 5.21) are numerous examples of cord impressed decoration (Fig. 6.26). Only one example of cord impressed pottery was securely recorded from P2. This sherd, 1080, sports a rounded profile and is decorated with several lines of cord impressions (Fig. 6.26). 195.1 is of a similar form, and both are comparable to the cord impressed vessel from the Pund of Burland (SFI8) (Fig. 6.28). Cord impressions are typically impressed at an angle creating triangular or chevron-based patterns. A similar effect was created with shell impressions at Stanydale House (SFI11) and possibly Stanydale Temple (SFI12) using oval impressions. The use of bevelled rims as a further zone

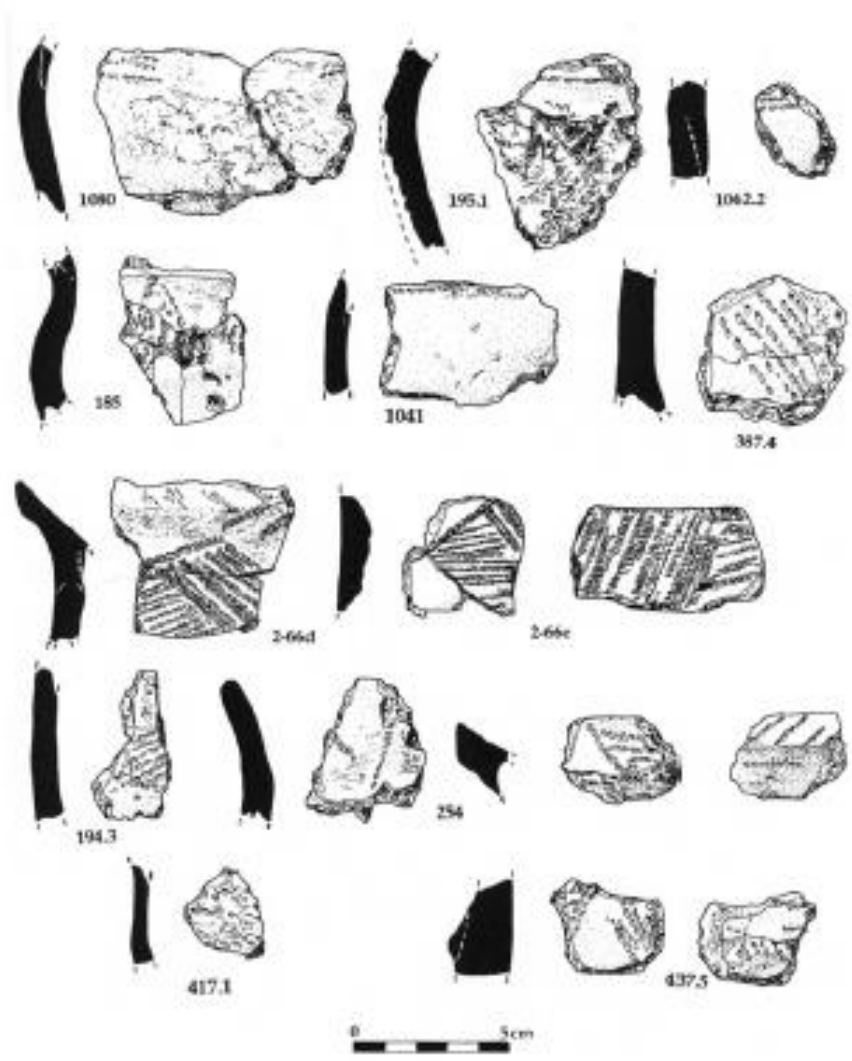

Figure 6.26: *Cord Impressed sherds and rims from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), Mainland (Downes & Lamb 2000)*

of decoration is seen on 254, whilst 4367.5 sports decoration on its interior (Fig.6.26). The deep bevelled rims 254 and 266d are reminiscent of those found on Food Vessels but are not completely unknown among Beakers, including examples from domestic contexts (*cf.* **Chapter 4**) (*e.g.* Figs. 2.36 & 2.37). Given the fragmentary state of the sherds reconstructing forms is difficult. Whilst the presence of sinuous sherds is suggestive of Beakers, caution should be expressed considering the range of other rounded and shouldered forms recorded from Shetland, including the round-shouldered vessels from Scord of Brouster (SFI9) and H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). The destruction of the timber house is dated to 2200-1830 cal BC (GU-1006) (**App. F1**). This date is based on a sample of charred rope from deposits underlying the stone house and the integrity of the sample is questionable (**App. F1**).

Discussion

The assemblage from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) contrasts with those seen at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Stanydale Temple (SFI12), in that it comprises a suite of thin walled vessels with deep bevelled rims. Close parallels for the Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) material include the small assemblage from the Pund Of Burland (SFI8) and the sherd from Cols Ness (SFI1). Whether Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) shows a shift from coarse, rock-tempered vessels in the 3rd millennium towards finer bevelled rim forms (overlapping stylistically with vessels from Culla Voe (SFI2) dated to 1900-1680 cal BC) is unclear considering the difficulties of phasing.

6.2.7 Wiltrow (SFI15)

The Assemblage

A preliminary review of the pottery from the Iron Age smeltery at Wiltrow (SFI15), housed in the Shetland Museum Store in Lerwick[15], revealed the presence of a small cord-impressed sherd. Whilst small the exterior, bears two finely impressed horizontal lines of cord impressions. The remaining sherds bear a range of geometric incisions (Fig. 6.27) (**App. B3.4**). Sherds are predominantly rock-tempered, ranging from coarse to finer examples (Table B3.3). The difficulty with the assemblage lies in dating it without clear indication of stratigraphic relationships, a problem encountered at several sites previously. The matter is somewhat compounded by our knowledge of early Iron Age sherds from sites such as Clickhimin (Hamilton, J. 1968: 147). Here, decorated sherds bearing incised chevrons occur in similar fabrics (*cf.* Murray, J. 2016). Calder suggested that the structure at Wiltrow (SFI15) could have

[15] *Further material from the site is housed in the N.M.S but this was not examined in detail.*

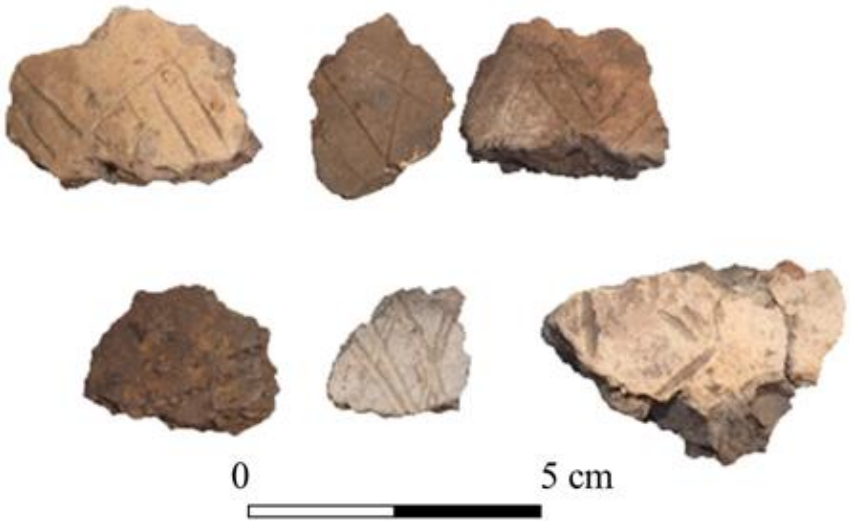

Figure 6.27: *Pottery from Wiltrow (SFI15), Mainland, housed in Shetland Museum & Archives (Author © S.M.A.)*

had a Neolithic / Early Bronze Age phase (1958: 379, 1965: 75), and it would seem reasonable to assign the cord impressed sherd to this period, as cord impressions are not generally seen outside of this period in Shetland (Scholma-Mason pers. obs.). One exception to this being V15 from Tangwick, which is decorated with thick cord impressions (Moore & Wilson 1999: 219).

Discussion

The closest parallel for this collection is the small assemblage from Ness of Gruting Workshop (SFI6). The mix of incised and potentially twisted cord/ comb is noted at several other sites in Shetland. Precise dating of the site, as with others in the region, is hampered by the poor stratigraphy. The coarse rock-temper of the sherds draws parallels with those from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and F1 from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), possibly suggesting a later 3rd millennium date for the pottery.

6.2.8 Pund of Burland (SFI8)

From the structure at the Pund of Burland (SFI8) 64 sherds, equating to around 14 vessels, were recovered during excavations in the 1960s (**App. B3.10**) (Table 6.4). The pottery was found in a variety of locations on site, principally from the western recess, the walls and the interior of the structure (**App. B3.10**). The position of the latter – over the wall and

Vessel Group	Sherd	Context	Description
V1	B72	In the walling	'Club' rim, with internal bevel. Outer surfaces decorated with diagonal incision, horizontal incision on interior.
V2	B76	In the walling	Similar to B72
V3	B74	? In the walling?	
V4	B4, B5, B34-56	Inside recess	Cord impressed vessel including rim and carination
V5	B62	Inside recess	Shouldered vessel internal rim bevel, single line of cord impressions on bevel

Table 6.4: *Diagnostic vessel groups Pund of Burland (SFI8), Trondra (for full list see **App. B3.10**)*

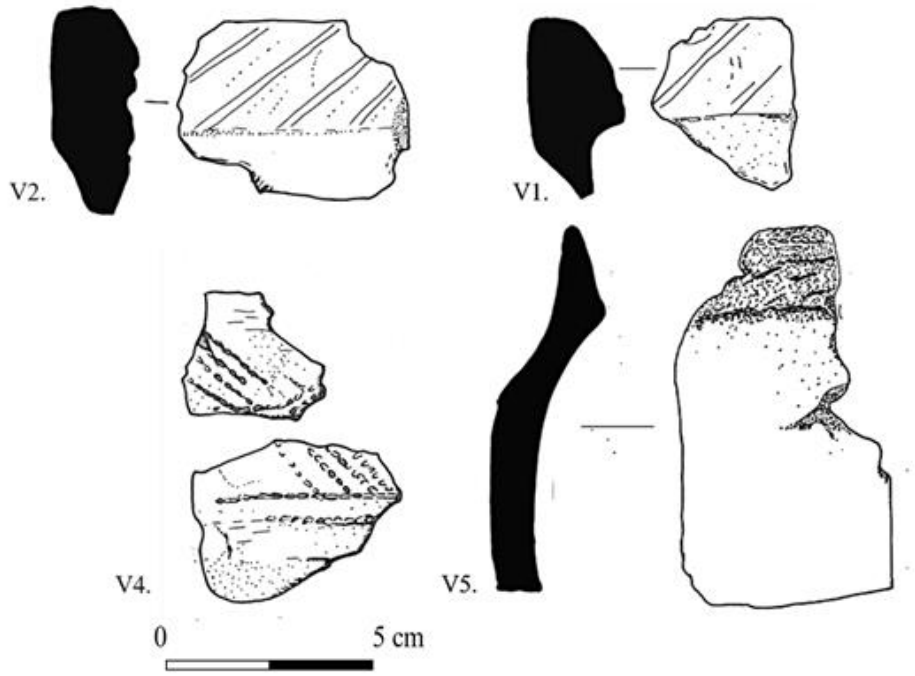

Figure 6.28: *Diagnostic vessels from the Pund of Burland (SFI8), Trondra (Author)*

intermixed with rubble – suggests later disturbance or dumping. From the western recess came numerous cord impressed sherds, likely from the same vessel, V4. The lower half of V4 appears to have been undecorated, though the upper half sports two horizontal cord impressed lines, with the rim decorated by a series of alternating cord impressions at an angle (Fig. 6.28).

Nearby was a shouldered sherd, V5, with an internally bevelled rim decorated with cord impressions. V4 whilst outwardly appearing to be Beaker like could represent the remains of a proto-collared vessel akin to those observed at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). If so this would represent a variation of proto-collared vessels as seen at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). The thin carinated sherds represent the remains of the upper part of the collar, decorated with a set of horizontal and diagonal twisted cord impressions. As with the H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) vessels, the area below is undecorated. The arrangement of the decoration, however, is more reminiscent of motifs at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), where diagonal and horizontal cord impressions were common (Fig. 6.26).

V5 sports a distinct shouldered profile with a curved zone between the shoulder and the rim, which is not defined from the body. The rim is deeply bevelled with a line of cord impressions on the interior. The exterior of the vessel is undecorated. Henderson compared the sherds to those of Punds Water II, which were thought to be Iron Age (Calder 1965: 68). 2-66d from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) is analogous, though the rims at both Punds Water II and Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) tend to be more everted (Figs. 6.26 & 6.29). Based on these parallels, however, it is possible that the sherds from Punds Water II are of late 3rd or 2nd millennium date rather than Iron Age. The presence of 'collared' vessels on a 'domestic' site does not need imply a funerary function, since examples of proto-collared vessels are found in non-funerary contexts (*i.e.* H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). However, the possibility of urned burials at the Pund of Burland (SFI8) cannot be ruled out (Ballin Smith pers. comm.). Given the mixed nature of the assemblage and lack of clarity regarding contexts, attributing function is difficult, and the possibility of different phases of use remains an open question. The final diagnostic group of sherds from the site comprised three vessels with thickened club-like rims, V1-3 (Fig. 6.28). Each rim is decorated with a series of diagonal incisions. These vessels appear to be unique to

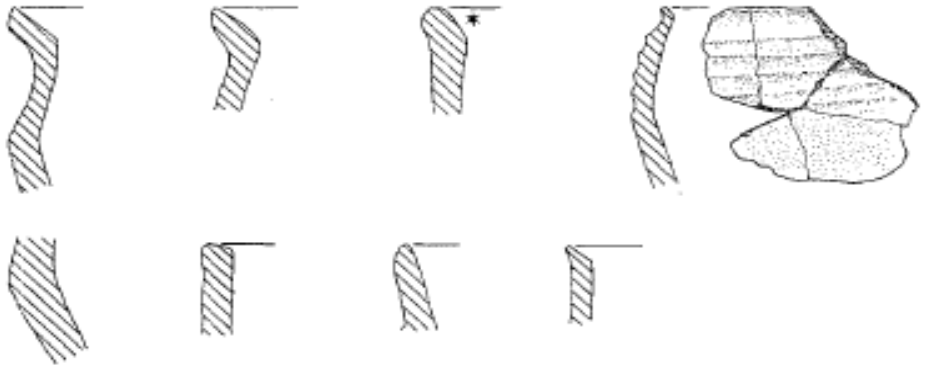

Figure 6.29: *Pottery from Punds Water II, Mainland (Calder 1958: Fig. 2)*

the site, but Henderson does draw parallel with the thickened rim from Stanydale Temple (SFI12). As argued, the coarse vessels from Stanydale Temple (SFI12) could date to the earlier/ mid 3rd millennium.

Discussion

Placing the assemblage from the Pund of Burland (SFI8) into its wider context is difficult, as it encompasses a range of distinct forms. The use of twisted cord and bevelled rims suggest a degree of contemporaneity with Sumburgh Airport (SFI13). There is further overlap in fabrics, including rock-tempering, but this is widespread across the region and not especially diagnostic. The assemblage is dominated by large coarse vessels, including examples of what can be described as proto-collared forms, but these appear to be distinct from the examples at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). This includes the use of twisted cord on the rim and exterior of the vessel (Fig. 6.28). Whether all the vessels relate to a domestic use or represent a later funerary use of the structure is unclear. If the latter hypothesis is accepted, the site could have been employed as a burial site following its initial use, potentially reflecting similar processes of closure and re-use as seen at Stanydale Temple (SFI12).

6.2.9 Cols Ness (SFI1)

The Assemblage

In addition to the assemblage from Pund of Burland (SFI8) a further sherd of cord-impressed pottery was recovered from an eroding structure at Cols Ness (SFI1) in 2002. The sherd has cord impressions on both sides, and on the outer surface two parallel horizontal lines of cord

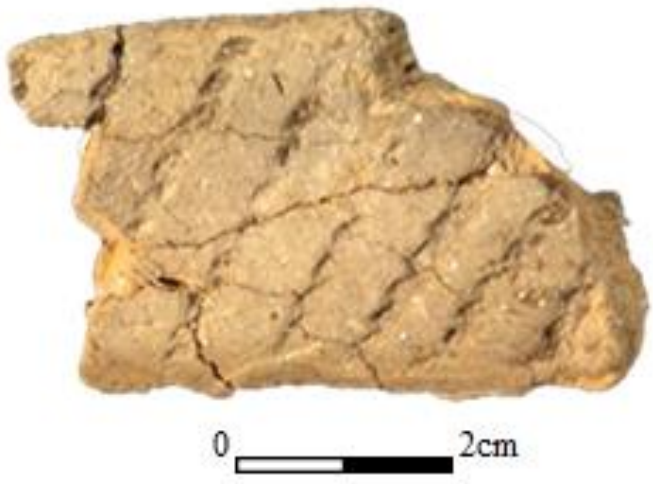

Figure 6.30: *Internal bevel of rim sherd from Cols Ness (SFI1), Isle of Noss (Author)*

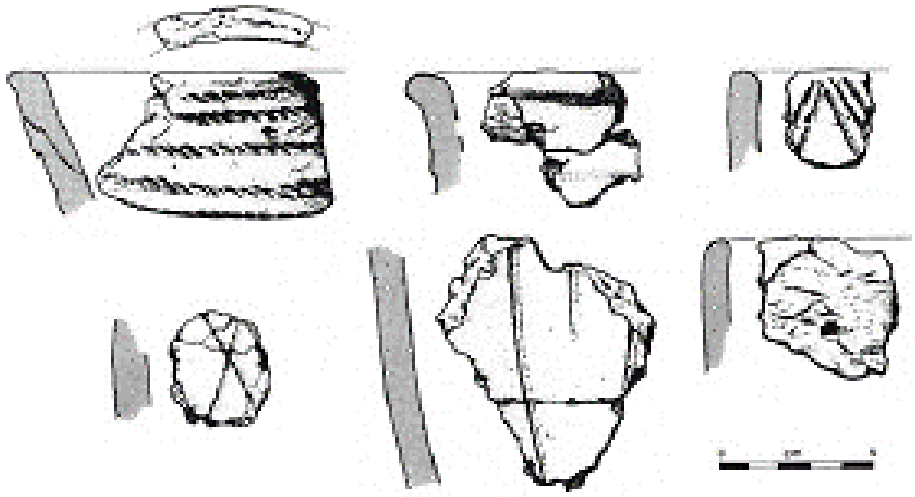

Figure 6.31: *Pottery from Tougs of Burra (SFI14), Burra (Hedges 1986: Fig 9)*

impressions run just below the rim (Fig. 6.30). No further lines were discernible, but the outer surfaces were slightly sooted. Diagonal lines of cord impressed decoration have been applied to the inner bevel of the rim, extending from the top edge and stopping roughly at the shoulder. The strongly everted rim and mode of decoration closely recall those from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) and is analogous to rims typically associated with Food Vessels (**Section 4.3.3**). The rim diameter measures around 190mm, whilst the neck/ internal face is about 30mm long. The shoulder thickens out and is slightly rounded.

Discussion

Based on one single fragment, little else can be stated except to reiterate the parallels with other cord impressed assemblages, notably examples from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13). Parallels can be drawn further afield with Kilellan Farm, where internally bevelled sherds with cord impressions were recorded (Fig. 2.37). This suggests a probable 2nd millennium date for the sherd, but the overall date of the site remains unclear.

6.2.10 Tougs of Burra (SFI14)

The Assemblage

From the burnt mound at Tougs (SFI14) came a distinctive coarse sherd from the neck/ rim of a vessel decorated with cord impressions (Fig. 6.31). In the past, this sherd has been cited as a Beaker, but its precise form cannot be stated. Other sherds feature decoration comparable to that from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), featuring incised lines, in some cases forming lattice patterns.

Discussion

The mix of incised and cord impressed sherds finds parallel among the material from the Pund of Burland (SFI8) and Wiltrow (SFI15). The use of multiple chevron motifs is a recurrent feature of Shetland assemblages during the 3rd and 2nd millennium, suggesting that motifs could remain static throughout the period. This raises questions about employing motifs as dating tools. As argued previously, incised chevrons have often been viewed as having a basis in Beakers (*e.g.* Sheridan 2013: 55), although there is little reason to assume such an explanation in the case of Shetland. In the absence of a clear regional sequence, invoking external parallels is fraught with difficulties (Hedges 1986: 30). These issues of chronology and sequence will be examined further in the following section.

6.2.11 Chronology

Radiocarbon dates are available for five of the previously discussed sites, including recent dates from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). Recent re-dating of the grain cache from under the peat ash in the outer wall suggests a construction date of 2280-2030 cal BC *(*AAR-15646*)* and 2150-1940 cal BC *(*AAR-15647) (see **App. F1**) (Fig. 6.32). As argued previously, there is a possibility of an earlier phase, with the occupation deposits equating to several phases. Animal bones from the site came out chronologically earlier at 2840-2470 cal BC (OxA-X-2579-42) (**App. F1**) (Fig. 6.32). This variance was explained through the impact of the uptake of old carbon through peat, which was employed as a fuel source (Sheridan *et al.* 2014: 215; *cf.* Snoeck *et al.* 2014). This, however, is only a problem if the date from the grain cache is interpreted as defining the overall chronological span of the building. Until the significance of carbon uptake has been resolved, caution should be expressed in the accuracy of dates not only from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), but other Shetland sites. Despite this, the possibility of older material being incorporated into the structure[16] cannot be dismissed outright, given the wide number of other sites recorded across the Shetland Isles with multiple phases. Activity at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), is bracketed by finds of later ceramic types, including probable Iron Age material (**App. B3.5**) and a pair of unfinished battle axes (HD1024, HD1025) (Fig. 6.7). These are comparable to examples from Doune (Sheridan 2013: 64), dated to *c.* 1870-1610 cal BC (Sheridan 2007a: 185). Along with the grain cache, this suggests a span of activity extending from the 23rd century to the 19th/ 18th century BC. Whether there is an early phase associated with rock tempered bucket/ tub vessels remains an open question (**Section 5.3.2**).

[16] Henshall suggested in her initial report that some of the pottery could pre-date the site, although Henshall suggested that this date could extend backwards by only a few months (1958: 381)

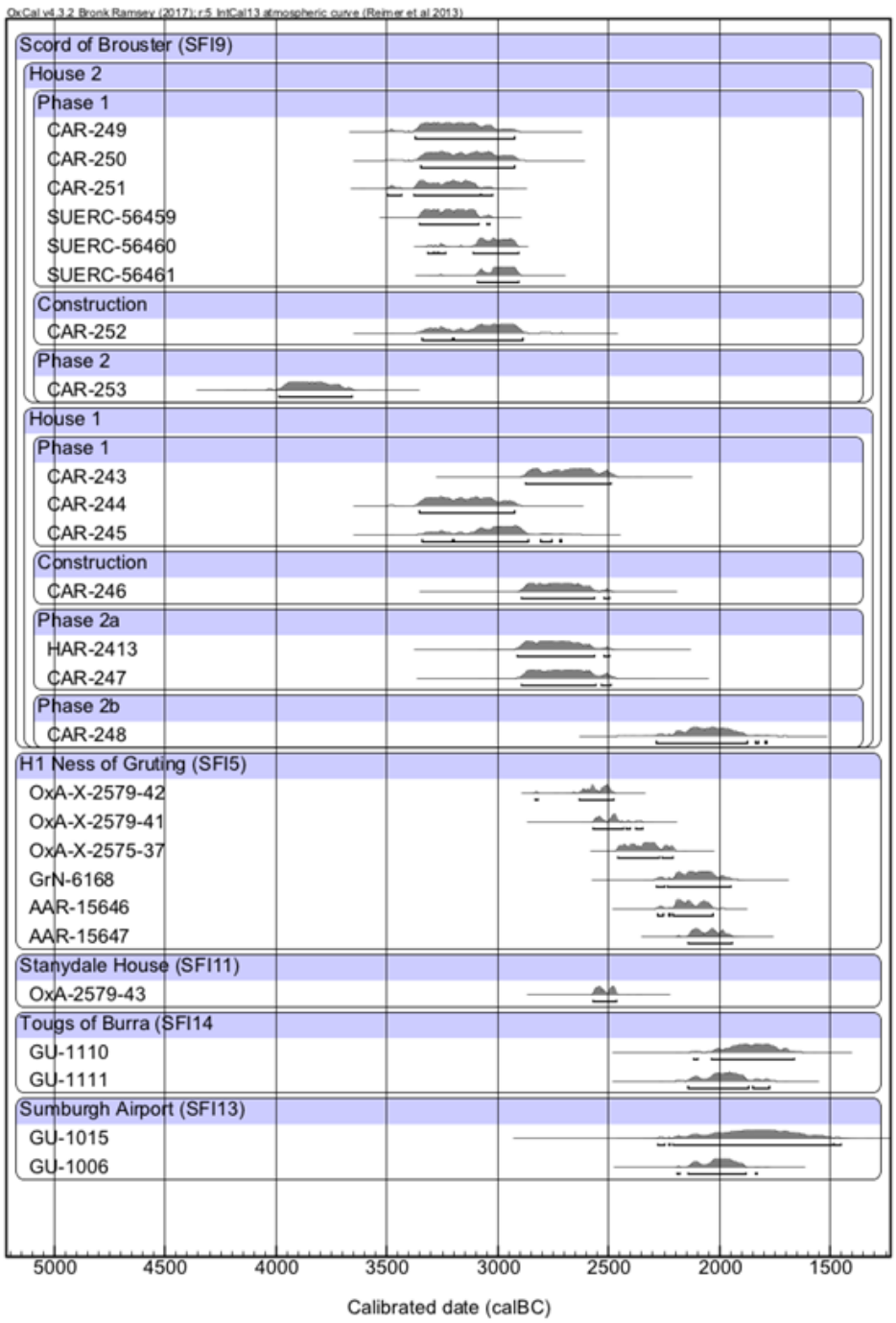

Figure 6.32: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates from Shetland domestic sites (See **App. F1** for details)*

Issues with old carbon uptake appear to have affected the date for the dated animal bone from Stanydale House (SFI11). Recent dating of animal bone produced a result of 2580-2460 cal BC (OxA-X-2579-43) (**App. F1**). As with H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), this date only appears erroneous if one assumes that the assemblage is Beaker or equates to a single phase.

At the Scord of Brouster (SFI9) the bulk of the available dates lie in the earlier part of the 3rd millennium (Fig. 6.32; see **Section 5.3.1**). Considering the difficulties in differentiating layers in H2, it is possible that some of the pottery belongs to later phases (*ibid.*: 214). The later phases of H1 date to 2290-1780 cal BC (Fig. 6.32), with H3 occupied through the early 2nd millennium, although no pottery was recovered from the latter. With regards to H1, the round-shouldered jars probably belong to this later phase. At Tougs of Burra (SFI14) the two dates from the mound derive from wood. Whilst they cannot be directly associated with the pottery, the date range is in keeping with those of Beakers from the south (Table 2.3). This date reinforces the notion that Beakers were employed in Shetland post-2300 cal BC. This concords with the date of the grain cache at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), but it is not possible to build a more detailed view. This does raise the question of the types of vessels employed prior to this, given the notable gap in the record, but at present this activity remains unclear (see **Section 5.3.2**). This problem of sequence is discussed in the conclusion of this chapter.

In summary, it can be argued that Beakers were in probability made and used in Shetland post-2300 cal BC. Bucket/ tub vessels, based on analogy elsewhere and limited dating within the Shetland Isles., could have been employed slightly earlier. These vessels could have bridged the gap between bowls and the various types recorded post 2300 BC. The notable differences between assemblages, as seen when comparing H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), could relate to temporal factors, but the significance of these differences cannot be ascertained at present. These differences could be used to argue that sites with bevelled rims and a predominance of cord impressed decoration lie later in the sequence, possibly overlapping with the dates of the vessels from Culla Voe (SFI2). H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Scord of Brouster (SFI9) could fall earlier than these with elements of both assemblages belonging to the mid or earlier 3rd millennium, overlapping in part with plain bowls of the preceding 4th millennium. In the absence of a regional sequence, dating based on visual similarity is problematic and differences could relate to the wider processes in which vessels were involved. This sequence will be revisited following examination of the limited funerary material.

6.2.12 Domestic key trends

Post Depositional Factors

One of the key difficulties encountered in understanding pottery from within Shetland is the long chronology of the sites and the variety of post-depositional factors taking place. Whilst Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) provides the clearest example of these processes, evidence of

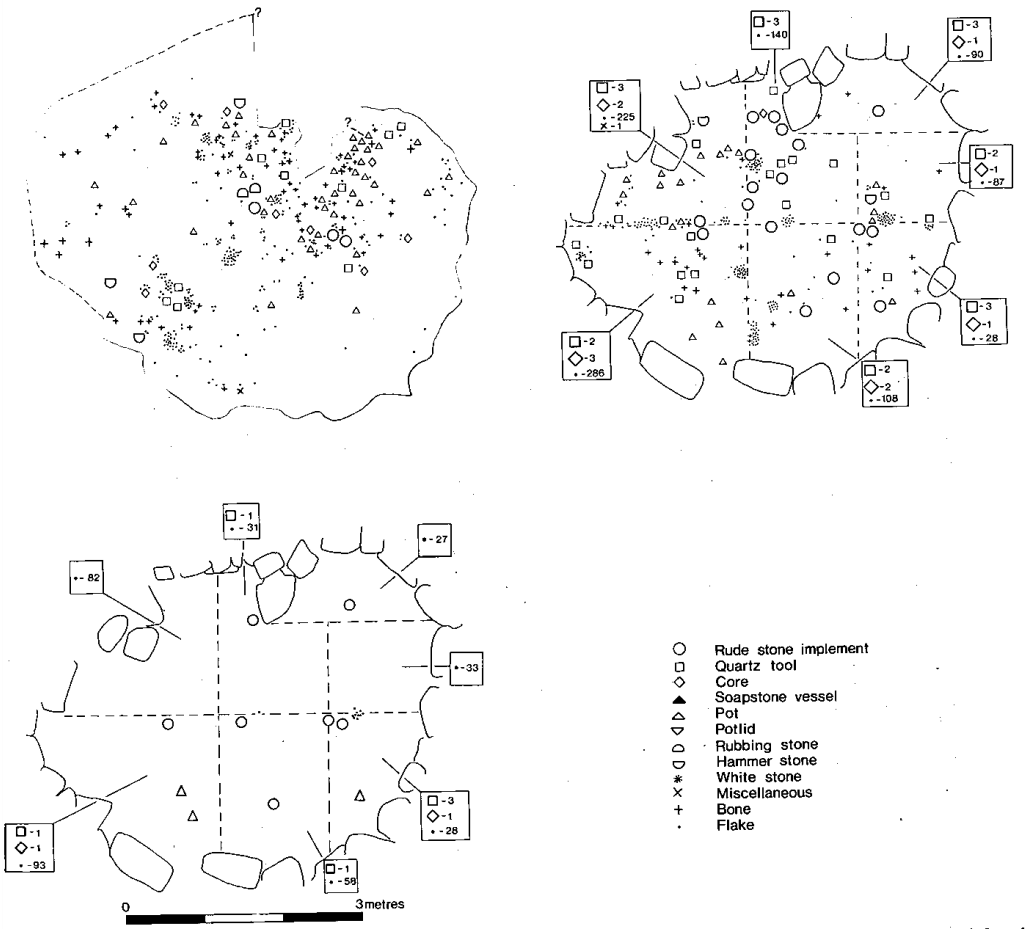

Figure 6.33: *Artefact distribution Scord of Brouster (SFI9, Mainland) (Whittle 1986: Fig 68)*

mixing has been noted at several other sites including Scord of Brouster (SFI9) and H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). In these cases, the indeterminate nature of the stratigraphy makes it difficult to discern phases and patterns of activity. In summary, a variety of post depositional processes can be defined:

- **Clearing of house interiors.** This is clearest at the Scord of Brouster (SFI9) where the distribution of finds within the interior suggests material was cleared from the centre of the structure, collecting at the peripheries (Fig. 6.33). Ash spreads at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) appear to have undergone similar movement, being raked out from the hearth. Periodic collection and removal of waste seems to have taken place, with only small fragmentary material remaining within the interior. This material could have been dumped in the surrounding area, or against the wall, providing material for the wall core. This process can be seen at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), where

occupation deposits were built up against the outer walls (Downes & Lamb 2000: 15). At Stanydale Temple (SFI12) it is possible that the large vessels from under the peat ash were left *in situ*.

- **Occupation deposit formation.** There are no clear examples of heaps of occupation refuse recorded from the sites, though possible occupation deposits are noted near to the structure at the Pund of Burland (SFI8) (Scholma-Mason pers. obs.). It is, however, unclear if these are spoil from the excavation or *in situ* deposits[17]. At Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) occupation deposits dumped against the outer wall of structures created a natural thickening of the walls. It is possible that a similar process occurred at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5).

- **Deliberate infilling of structures.** The large quantities of peat ash and other midden material recovered from the interior of structures suggests that structures during the period were deliberately closed and backfilled. These processes find clear parallel in other parts of Britain. This suggests that house sites in Shetland could have potentially complex life histories, their subsequent decommissioning representing a "*powerful mnemonic act*" (Jones, A. *et al.* 2016: 357). These acts create memories and associations between people and places. These links can be reinforced by the potential use of such structures for structured and funerary deposits.

- **Later disturbance.** This factor accounted for the greatest amount of disturbance as dramatically shown at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13), where early pottery was recorded from Iron Age deposits. Sites were occupied over lengthy periods, and whilst the tempo of this activity is unclear, this could range from wholesale rebuilding or the deposition of later materials. The incorporation of the cord impressed sherds at Stanydale Temple (SFI12) could stem from such later dumping and disturbance.

Bearing these processes in mind, I will briefly summarise the key trends within domestic sites in the next section.

[17] *Several small quartz implements were recovered from these deposits during a visit to the site in 2013 (**App. B3.10**).*

	Beaker, indet. form	Beaker weak-profile	Bucket/ tub indet.	Bucket/ tub angled walls	Bucket/ tub, u-shaped	Regional form, indet. form	Regional form, ridged jar	Regional form proto collared	Regional form, carinated jar	Regional form, shouldered-jar
Sumburgh Airport (SFI13)	?		x			?				
Scord of Brouster (SFI9)	?		x							x
Ness of Gruting (SFI5)	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	
Stanydale Temple (SFI12)			x	x	x				x	
Pund of Burland (SFI8)			x					x		

Table 6.5: *Principal forms recorded from domestic sites in Shetland*

Discussion: Domestic assemblages, types and roles

During the 3rd millennium a range of vessel forms are in use, with sites showing considerable diversity (Table 6.5). Whilst rounded bellies and other components that could be labelled as sinuous were identified, caution should be expressed in labelling these as Beakers. Contextually, there are few recurring associations in terms of decoration or fabric that allow for refinement of vessel groups. A further problem is the uncertainty attached to the longevity of decorative motifs, and whether chevrons and incised motifs have a longer pedigree, possibly extending back into the earlier 3rd millennium (see **Section 5.3**). As noted previously, differences can be observed between assemblages, but the significance of these is difficult to establish. There are marked differences between the assemblage at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) and H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). The latter lacks examples of deeply bevelled rims and twisted

cord decoration. This could reflect temporal differences, with deeply bevelled rims as at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) and the Pund of Burland (SFI8) falling later. The possibility of an early-mid 3rd millennium date for some of the H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) material has been previously discussed (**Section 5.3**).

Moving from these problems the principal form groups defined in a domestic context are:

- ***Beaker:*** Definable forms were rare, except for the weak s-profile vessel from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). Recorded vessels typically sported sinuous profiles, but closely overlap with other defined regional forms. These vessels do not appear to form a strongly articulated group, overlapping and sharing elements with other form groups. Whilst Beakers are typically of small diameter and thin-walled, larger versions are known from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). As with the large vessel from Stanydale Temple (SFI12) and the rounded shouldered vessels from Scord of Brouster (SFI9), they can be envisaged as having a storage function. The smaller vessels served in preparatory and serving roles.

- ***Bucket/ tub:*** These are typically undiagnostic, but several bear similarities to Grooved Ware, and could belong to the earlier 3rd millennium (**Section 5.3.1**). As noted, the absence of stratified deposits at several sites makes determining the interrelationship between these and Beakers difficult. These likely represent a range of utilitarian vessels employed in storage and food preparation. The basic form of these vessels could be long lasting, initially appearing in the earlier 3rd millennium (**Section 5.3.2**). Forms range from angled to u-shaped at Stanydale Temple (SFI12), whilst straight-walled vessels are noted at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13). In the case of the remaining sites form is unclear. The largest examples stem from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). Rims tend to range from simple to developed, with internal or external bevels. In several cases, these are marked out by sub-rim cordons. It is hard to argue at present whether these chronologically overlap, but the similarity in terms of form and decoration suggest a degree of overlap. These could include undiagnostic coarse wares, which were generally hard to define given the fragmentary state of the assemblages.

- ***Shetland Regional Forms:*** These vessels represent an eclectic group, several of which were likely employed as storage vessels. Whilst sporting sinuous profiles akin to Beakers, proto-collared vessels have an increased emphasis on a groove

between the neck and rim, creating a distinct collar-like appearance. These could have developed from the need to tie covers over the mouth of the vessel as in the case of Collared Urns (Longworth 1984: 6). These were primarily recovered from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), with a single example from the Pund of Burland (SFI8). The latter example differs slightly in fabric and decoration, being decorated with twisted cord, which was not recorded at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). Other regional forms included ridged and carinated vases recorded at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and carinated jars (Table 6.2).

Across each of the form groups, incision is the primary mode of decoration being noted at all the sites. Pottery from MII at Jarlshof could be added to this group but the dating of this assemblage is unclear. Among the pottery are examples of earlier grass tempered bowls (Fig. 6.34). Recent re-dating of Midden II has produced dates of 1880-1690 cal BC and 1750-1600 cal BC (Dockrill & Bond 2009: 50). The enigmatic bone plaque from Midden II could be associated with this date. The plaque is decorated with geometric motifs, which have been paralleled with designs found on Beakers (Sheridan 2012a: 26) (Fig. 6.35). Returning to the pottery from Jarlshof, Downes notes the similarity between the flanged rim 2-66d, from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) and rim forms at Jarlshof (2000c: 53). Sherd 1747 from Tougs (SFI14) is reminiscent of late 3rd millennium pottery from Tofts Ness (ORK19) in terms of form and mode of decoration (Figs. 7.5 & 7.6). This decorative mode does not appear to be particularly diagnostic and could have a long chronological basis in the Shetland Isles (**Section**

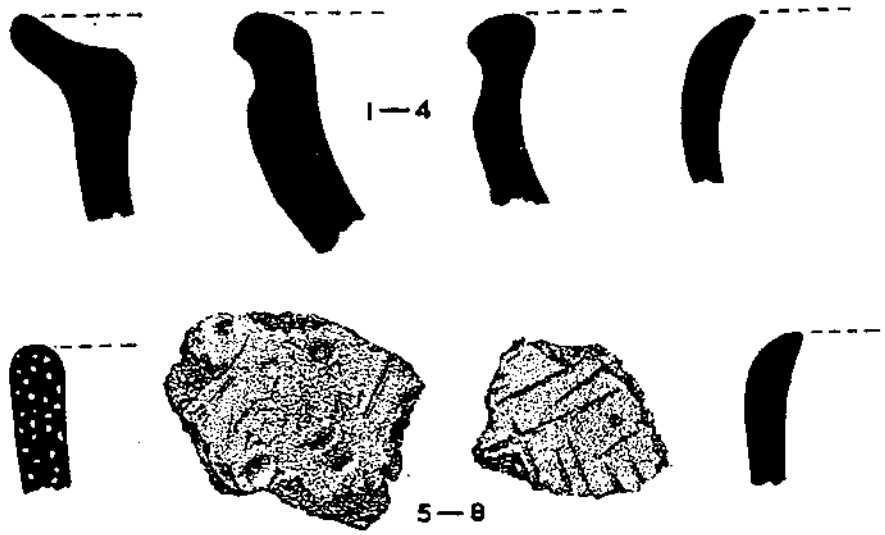

Figure 6.34: *MII Pottery from Jarlshof, Mainland (Hamilton, J. 1956: Fig. 9) (not to scale)*

Figure 6.35: *Bone plaque with geometric decoration. from Jarlshof, Mainland. Length: 127mm, Max. width: 38mm (© N.M.S)*

5.3.1). Chevron motifs, whilst commonly incised, are created using twisted cord impressions (*e.g.* at Sumburgh Airport (SFI13)) (Fig. 6.26). Twisted cord impressions are noted at Ness of Gruting Workshop (SFI6) as well as the Pund of Burland (SFI8) and Sumburgh Airport (SFI13). The absence of cord impressions at several sites including Scord of Brouster (SFI9) and H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) could be interpreted as signalling temporal differences. Considering this twisted cord could represent a late feature becoming popular from around 2200 BC, based on the limited dating evidence. This notion is further explored later in this chapter.

6.3 Funerary finds

6.3.1 Nature of the evidence

Only four funerary sites were recorded from within the region as part of this project (Fig. 6.36) (Table 6.6) (**App. A1.2**). Alongside these, a range of additional finds (including now lost artefacts from several cairns) were identified. Many of these have been robbed out and little

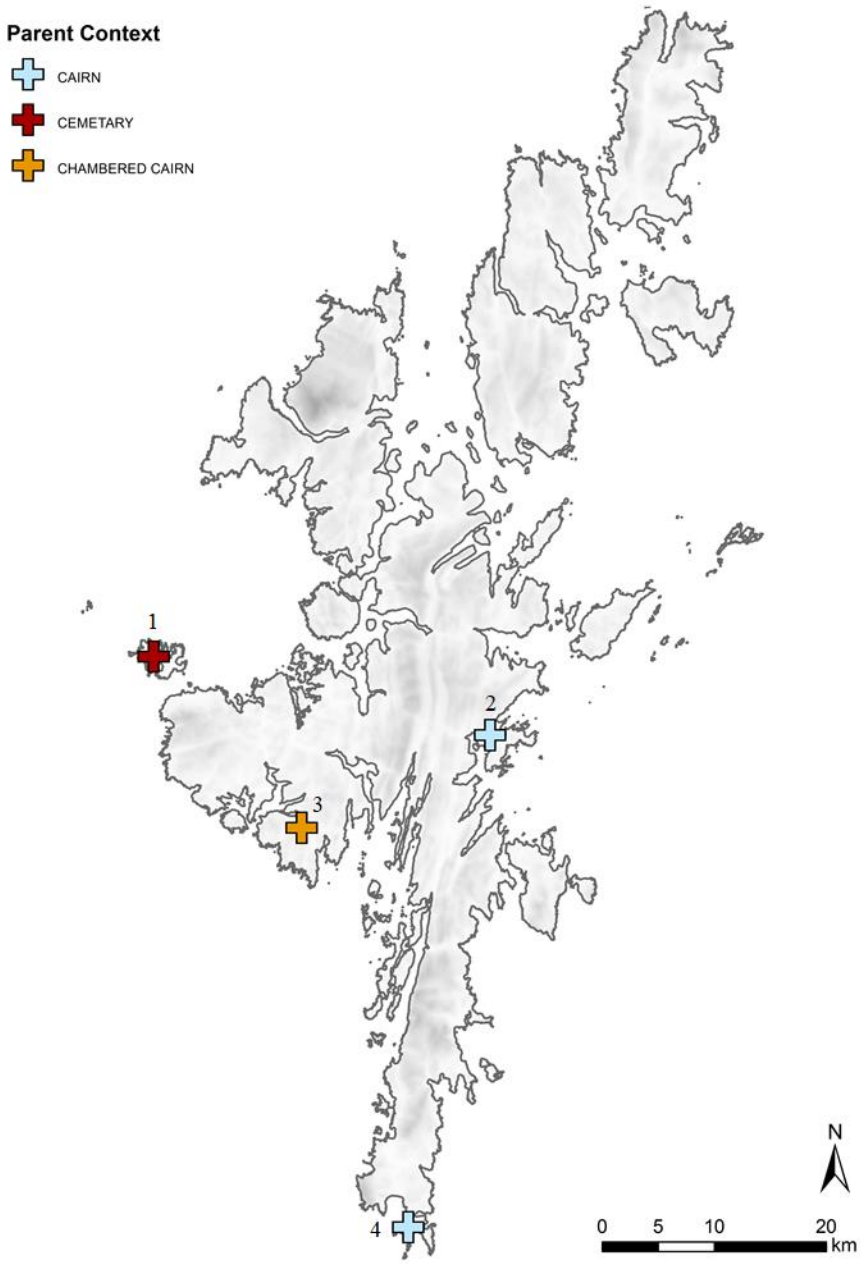

Figure 6.36: *Distribution of funerary sites with pottery discussed in text:*

Key: ***1.*** *Culla Voe (SFI2), Papa Stour,* ***2.*** *South Nesting (SFI10), Mainland,* ***3.*** *Giants Grave (SFI4), Mainland,* ***4.*** *Fraga, Mainland (SFI3)*

extant information or finds remain. As noted in the preceding chapter very few have been scientifically dated. Fragments of charcoal from pre-cairn deposits at the Hill of Crooksetter suggest a *terminus post quem* of 2025-1880 cal BC for when the cairn was constructed (Cummings *et al. forthcoming*). At Muckle Heog a similarly late date has been proposed (Sheridan 2012a: 26) (*cf.* **Section 5.3.1**). It is unclear if in certain cases façades were added to

Site	Code	Parent Context/ Sub-context	Reference
Culla Voe	SFI2	Cairn/ Short cist	Barron 1895
South Nesting	SFI10	Cairn/ Disturbed	Dockrill *et al.* 1998
Giants Grave	SFI4	Cemetery	Hunt 1866
Fraga	SFI3	Chambered cairn	Bryce 1933

Table 6.6: *Principal funerary sites discussed in text (see **Apps. H1** & **H2** for definitions of parent and sub-contexts)*

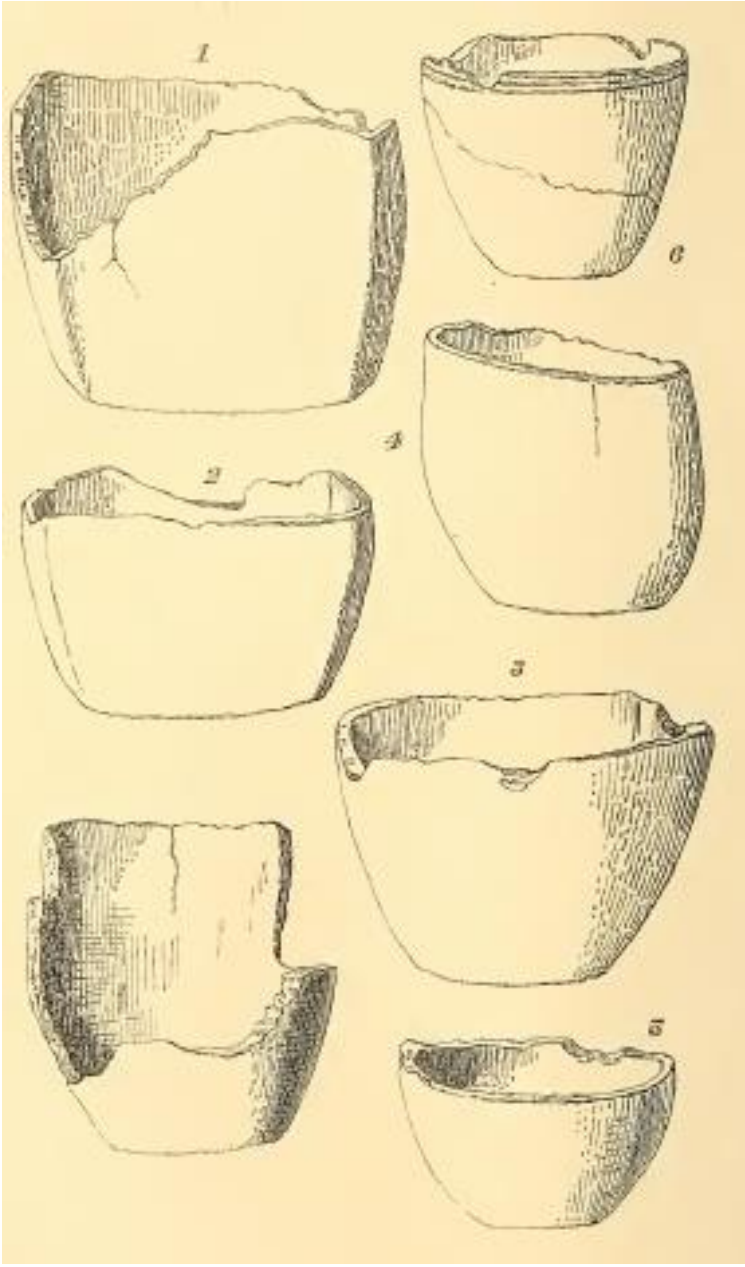

Figure 6.37: *Lost Urns from Muckle Heog East, Unst (Tate 1865: 296)*

existing monuments, suggesting potential modification of structures at later dates (Downes 2000a: 124). Mercer in his analysis of chambered cairns from Caithness strongly argued for a process of '*cumulicity'*, with round cairns set atop earlier horned cairns, producing a new form of monument (1992: 53). Considering this, heel-shaped cairns in Shetland could represent the outcome of long term processes. The addition of the façade at Stanydale Temple (SFI12) and the presence of unbroken façades at several cairns (Henshall 1963: 149)[18], hint at similar processes of '*cumulicity'* in Shetland. Considering this, caution should be expressed in assuming all heel-shaped cairns are of a single period (*contra.* Sheridan 2013: 65) From the cairn at Muckle Heog East several steatite vessels, often of irregular square shape, along with oval vessels, and further pottery fragments, were recovered (Henshall 1963: 170; Tate 1865) (Fig. 6.37**)**. Two small fragments of pottery, one containing steatite grits, were recovered from March Cairn (Henshall 1963: 168) and a very fragmentary sherd was found at Pettigarths Field (*ibid.*: 172).

Moving beyond these poorly documented finds there are several probable cemetery sites in the region. In Fair Isle, a cemetery containing multiple burials and a steatite urn was uncovered (Hunter, J. 1996: 78). The bulk of the burials were simple, consisting of pits containing burnt bone and sealed with flat stones (Anderson 1883: 73). Another possible burial at Gillie was excavated on the west side of Fair Isle (Hunter, J. 1996: 79). A small cemetery is recorded by Callander at Culla Voe (SFI2) in Shetland, containing several vessels (Callander 1933a: 348). Other vessels noted by Callander include the fingernail-decorated vessel from Wesidale, the incised vessel from Flemington and the vessels from Quarff (*ibid.*) (Fig. 6.39). From the double cist at Little Asta two pots were recovered (Abercromby 1912: no. 524, 525). Further finds have been made from cists in the Shetland Isles, including Fraga, (SFI3) and the octagonal cist at Giants Grave (SFI4) associated with a cairn. A sherd decorated with circular impressions was recovered from Unst (N.M.S 1892: 178) (Fig. 6.38), but the exact provenance is unknown. As with the Fraga (SFI3) and Giants Grave (SFI4) vessels, the sherd has in the past been associated with Beakers (*e.g.* Clarke, D.L. 1970: no.1777, no. 1779).

[18] These unbroken façades could have served as blocking or modification of the front of the cairn (Henshall 1963: 149). Recent work at Crooksetter revealed evidence for a primary phase and a later phase when the monument was elaborated. The cairn itself was partly built over the remains of an earlier house (Cummings et al. forthcoming).

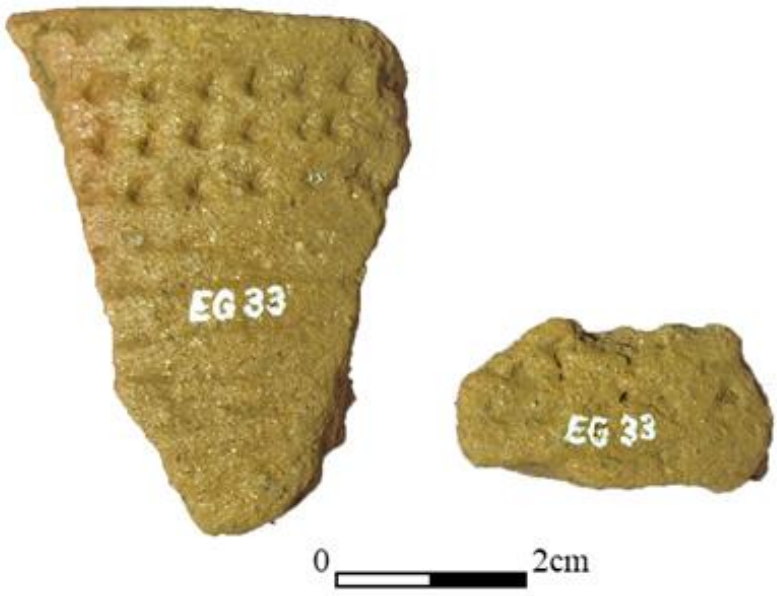

Figure 6.38: *Impressed sherd from Unst (© N.M.S)*

6.3.2 Indeterminate Vessels

Three indeterminate vessels were recorded but given the fragmentary condition of the sherds attributing the vessels to form groups is not possible. In the past, these vessels have been argued to equate to Beakers, based on the use of twisted cord and their association with stone-built cists. These include the sherds from South Nesting (SFI10), Giants Grave (SFI4) and Fraga (SFI3). The latter two examples are now lost, and the following discussion is based on extant descriptions.

Funerary Contexts

The sherds from South Nesting Site 232 (SFI10) were recovered from a cairn containing a central chamber 2m in diameter. Finds of cremated bone and pottery were recorded on either side of the chamber, indicating a level of disturbance (Dockrill *et al.* 1998: 79). From within the cairn at Fraga (SFI3) a substantial cist was discovered, as at South Nesting (SFI10) the cist showed signs of disturbance (Bryce 1933: 34). Details regarding the burial at Giants Grave (SFI4) are limited, but the chamber was octagonal, formed of coarse boulders (Hunt 1866: 310)[19]. The cairn itself has long been removed but may have originally been heel-shaped in

[19] *Gough refers to standing stones in the area but the relationship of these stones to the grave is unclear (1786: xii)*

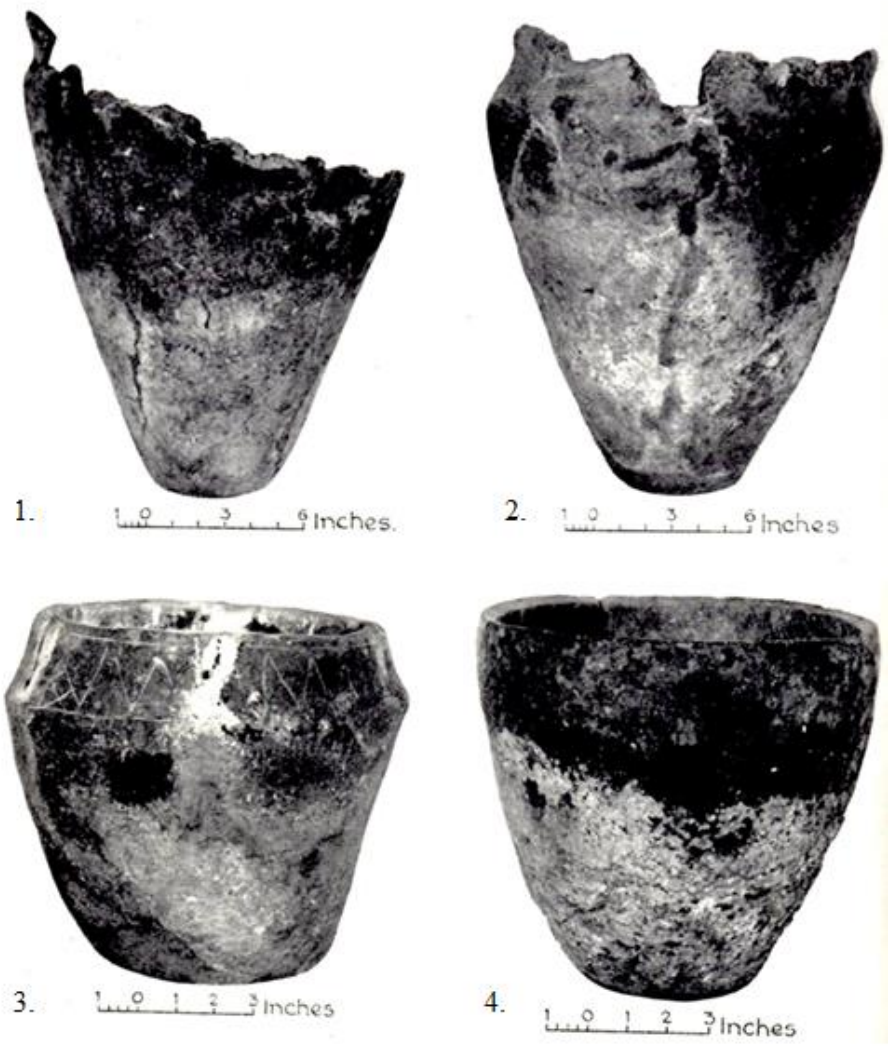

Figure 6.39: *Vessels recovered from funerary contexts in Shetland:*

Key: ***1.*** *Culla Voe (SFI2),* ***2.*** *Culla Voe (SFI2), Papa Stour,* ***3.*** *Flemington, Mainland,* ***4.*** *Quarff, Mainland (Images from Grant 1933)*

plan (*ibid.*). The cairn at South Nesting (SFI10) sported a similar heel-shaped façade (Dockrill *et al.* 1998: 79).

Morphology & Associations

The sherds from South Nesting (SFI10) are compared in the report to those from the nearby house and burnt mound at Trowie Loch (*ibid.:* 80)[20]. Among the sherds from the cairn are a

[20] *This material is unpublished at present and it was not possible to examine these and compare the finds from the cairn which was examined as part of this research.*

single bevelled rim with a curving profile akin to examples from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13). The outer surfaces were decorated with a series of horizontal cord impressions (Scholma-Mason pers obs.). Fourteen sherds of pottery were recovered from the cist at Fraga (SFI3)[21]. The pottery is described as decorated in zones by incision, comprising "*upright zigzags and by at least two narrow bands of crossed lines showing a lozenge pattern*" (Bryce 1933: 35). The rim is everted, and the overall description is suggestive of a Beaker, but in the absence of the sherds this cannot be stated with certainty. The brief note on the excavation by Hunt of the sherds from Giants Grave (SFI4) gives little additional information, except to remark that a piece of pot, with string ornament, some cremated bones and a large stone were recovered (Hunt 1866: 310). The sherds from South Nesting (SFI10) were also associated with a cremation, whilst those from Fraga (SFI3) were found with a crouched inhumation of a young adult (Bryce 1933: 35).

Summary

Considering the uncertainties regarding form, context and association only a few basic observations can be made. The first is the association of cord impressed pottery with chambered cairns, this occurs in at least two instances. It is possible, given current dating of heel-shaped cairns, that these sherds are contemporary with the use of these (see above). The possibility of secondary reuse of older monuments though cannot be ruled out. Such a phenomenon is widely documented across Scotland (*e.g.* Wilkin 2016). Without being able to examine the sherds from Fraga (SFI3) and Giants Grave (SFI3) it is not possible to assess their relationship to other cord-impressed sherds from the region more fully.

6.3.3 Food Vessel Vases

Only two examples of high-shouldered Food Vessels were recorded from Culla Voe (SFI2) (Fig. 6.39).

Funerary Contexts

The site of the burials was defined by small settings of stones, and in at least three cases the vessels were covered with a flat stone (Callander 1933: 348). Similar patterns of burial are

[21] *In 1974 from the Knowe of Fraga came a further sherd of steatitic pottery, burnished and black on interior. Currently housed at Shetland Museum (ARC7439)*

documented in Orkney as at Quandale (ORK14), where burials were predominantly set into pits or small cists (**Section 7.4**, Fig. 7.30).

Morphology & Associations

The surviving vessels range in size from 444-457mm (*ibid.*) and are associated with cremation burials. Both are high-shouldered with a concave zone above, with everted rims. No trace of decoration was recorded. The vessels were found in association with cremation burials (Barron 1895: 47). The form and size of the vessels is reminiscent of Food Vessel Urns, which are frequently recorded from funerary contexts in association with cremation burials (**Section 2.4**).

Chronology

One of the vessels from Culla Voe (SFI2) is associated with a date of 1900-1680 cal BC (GrA-24056) (**App. F1**), overlapping with the cremation associated with the Sand Fiold (ORK17) vessel, which is similar in form (Fig. 7.26). Both vessels fit within the general currency of Food Vessel Urns described in **Section 2.4**.

Summary

In contrast to the previously described indeterminate vessels, the pots from Culla Voe (SFI2) are distinct in form and can be readily paralleled with large high-shouldered vessels from Orkney, especially Sand Fiold (ORK17). In both cases, vessels were associated with cremations. In addition, the morphology of the rim is like the deep-bevelled rims recorded at domestic sites including Sumburgh Airport (SFI13). This could be interpreted as evidence of a degree of temporal overlap between the two sites.

6.3.4 Summary Forms & chronology

Three principal contexts of burial can be defined in Shetland:

- Deposition of remains and vessels into chambered cairns, but the dating of this activity is ambiguous. It is unclear if these relate to the primary phase or later phases which saw the modification of existing monuments.

- Deposition of remains into stone-built cists. The use of cists appears to be a long-standing practice in Shetland (*i.e.* Sumburgh Cist, Fig. 5.20), and the use

of cists, as at Fraga (SFI3), need not indicate the influence of an external ideology, but rather the continuity of a long-standing tradition (see also the recent discussion regarding cists and heel-shaped cairns in Cummings *et al. forthcoming.*). The absence of a full chronological sequence prohibits a fuller understanding of continuity and discontinuity within the region. Indeed, in other areas there is a gap between the use of cists in the Neolithic and then in the Bronze Age (*cf.* Gibson, A. 2004).

- Placement of vessels into pits, often arranged as cemeteries with small piles of stones marking out burials. Associated primarily with cremation burials.

In the case of the final category, vessels were employed as containers for human remains, but the role of vessels in the other two cases is unclear. These range from plain bucket vessels as at Quarff, to collared examples at Flemington, and finally the high shouldered vessels from Culla Voe (SFI2) (Fig. 6.39). It seems probable that vessels were placed as accompaniment akin to those found in the south. The placement and arrangement of the burial at Fraga (SFI3) is reminiscent of crouched inhumations from further south, but in the absence of additional information caution should be exercised in drawing direct parallels. The sequence of burial within the region overall is unclear, the role and function of heel-shaped cairns in this sequence is similarly uncertain owing to the lack of well excavated examples (see Cummings *et al. forthcoming*).

Similar problems apply to the study of steatite vessels from the area, the bulk of which derive from poorly documented excavations (Sharman 2005: 39). These include the vessels from Muckle Heog (Fig. 6.37) and the example from Fair Isle. These vessels, as with the other types described above, appear to have been involved in cremations, being placed in a wide range of funerary settings.

6.4 Summary: regional characteristics

6.4.1 Contextual Typology

In sum the evidence shows several regional developments in the period under study. Unfortunately understanding these in relation to the overall ceramic sequence of the region is still problematic. Despite this, several key form groups can be identified, which show a high degree of mixing and variability from site to site. As highlighted in **Chapter 3** and **4**, pots

exist in a fluid continuum, with a range of coded and less coded types. Whilst Beaker aspects can be defined, these do not form coherent types, but are blended into a range of other pots, creating a series of distinct regional forms. This echoes Hedges' previous discussion of material from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Stanydale Temple (SFI12), where he concluded that *"Beaker influence, if not presence is evident*" (1986: 30). The same argument could be extended to the Grooved Ware elements seen at several sites. As noted in the case of H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) it is unclear, whether the pottery represents a multi or single-phase assemblage, drawing on a range of ceramic traditions. In the absence of further dates caution should be expressed in invoking external parallels without a clear understanding of the regional sequence.

Importantly, decoration cuts across differences in form, with similar motifs and techniques found across all the defined groups (Table 6.7). In turn differences in form can in part be attributed to function, with a range of large storage vessels and smaller serving and preparatory vessels, as evidenced at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). Secondly, variations can in part be attributed to chronological differences, as suggested in the case of cord impressions which fall post 2200 BC. Given the lack of dating evidence, stratigraphic resolution and post-depositional factors, caution should be expressed in approaching assemblages as single-phase. Alternatively, it can be argued that variations between sites suggest the existence of site-specific ceramic assemblages, bound at a macro scale by shared modes of decoration and, to a lesser degree, shared elements of form. These questions will be returned to following an examination of the key features of each of the principal groups defined here.

Beakers

Vessels of this group represent a wide variety of sinuous forms primarily recovered from domestic contexts (Table 6.7). In most cases, determining vessel forms was not possible. Indeed, as highlighted, given the range of rounded/ globular vessels in Shetland (including proto-collared and carinated types), caution should be expressed in firmly attributing vessels to one type or another, especially in the absence of a clear regional sequence. The cord-impressed sherds from funerary contexts and Stanydale Temple (SFI12) are not indicative enough to be assigned to one group or the other[22]. As seen, cord impressions are found on a wide number of vessels and cannot be considered as a diagnostic feature. Similarly, fine fabrics cannot be held as being diagnostic (*contra.* Sheridan 2012). Whilst there is a slight distinction

[22] *Crichton-Mitchell iterated a similar point in her examination of Scottish Beakers, stating that the few sherds from Shetland were "too small for profitable discussion" (1934: 159)*

in fabric and appearance between sherds from Stanydale Temple (SFI12), Fraga (SFI3), and the unprovenanced sherds from Unst, the significance of this variation is difficult to interpret given the small sample size.

At H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Scord of Brouster (SFI9) the probable Beakers comprise an eclectic mix of sinuous vessels. Several vessels from Sumburgh Airport (SFI12) show signs of sinuous profiles, notably 185, and the sherds from South Nesting (SFI10) could be of a similar form. In summary, definable Beakers are rare, being limited to a handful of sherds at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), and possible examples from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) and Scord of Brouster (SFI9). The sherds from Tougs (SFI4) could stem from Beakers, but it was not possible to re-examine these sherds.

Food Vessels

The only definite examples of these came from Culla Voe (SFI2), associated with cremation burials. Among the domestic assemblages, including Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) and Cols Ness (SFI1), deeply bevelled or expanded rims were recorded. Comparisons can be made between these and expanded rim vessels from Kilellan Farm and Ardnave (Cowie, R. 2005) (Figs. 2.35 & 2.37) As noted, expanded rims are absent from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), which could be indicative of temporal differences between sites.

Bucket/ tub

Vessels of this type are common and represent the primary vessel for storage and consumption – probably until the 2nd millennium, when carinated and rounded jars are used. It is likely that bucket/ tub vessels persist into the 2nd millennium. Vessels range from straight walled types, to angled and u-shaped vessels showing high degrees of variation from one site to another. Where decorated vessels share motifs in common with Beakers and regional types. These include recurrent use of incised chevron motifs.

Regional forms

These were principally defined in domestic contexts, often encompassing large storage vessels. In total, three forms were defined, the majority of these came from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). With the remaining sites, vessels were too fragmentary to allow for detailed reconstructions. At the Pund of Burland (SFI8) and H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) proto-collared vessels were noted, but these do not form a clear group, instead being defined by the presence

of incipient collars. These were primarily created by a shallow groove or depression between the rim and shoulder (Fig. 6.17). Forms demonstrate a mixture of elements, including Beakers, Food Vessels and bucket/ tub in terms of form and decoration. These collars can in part be functional, but their use in funerary contexts cannot be ruled out. The vessels from Flemington can be argued to be collared, and indeed the decoration and style of collar finds parallels to the south (Fig. 6.39).

6.5 Summary & Conclusions

The preceding chapter has illustrated the diversity of ceramics in use during the period 2500-1800 BC. In total, four groups were defined, encompassing a diverse array of forms. Notable among these were a series of regional types, which blended and blurred aspects of other ceramic traditions. As emphasised, however, in the absence of detailed contextual and chronological information the significance of any trends should be approached cautiously.

This chapter opened with a review of the domestic evidence from the region, which has formed the bulk of this analysis. During this discussion, a variety of vessel forms were identified. These show a high degree of variation from site to site and do not appear to be highly coded (Table 6.7). Considering these differences, the application of labels should be approached with caution, as these can mask this variety. As argued, notable differences can be observed between the assemblage from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Sumburgh Airport (SFI13). These variances were suggested to relate to temporal factors, which could indicate a growing preference for shouldered/ cord decorated vessels towards the end of the 3rd millennium or early 2nd millennium. This could indicate a shift away from bucket /tub forms and incised schemes during the late 3rd / early 2nd millennium. It seems probable following Sheridan, that Beakers were not used in the region until post 2300 cal BC (2013: 64).

Through the course of the analysis, four primary post-depositional factors were identified, providing a model with which to understand site formation and ceramic deposits within the region. The absence of comprehensive stratigraphic information prohibited a more detailed analysis of these trends. Based on the present evidence it is unclear how these pots were categorised, as is their role in the formation of the 'social'. Consumptive practices involved, and were articulated through, a series of often highly decorated vessels. These included large vessels for storage and cooking, and potentially smaller vessels for consumption. The house

Form	Site Type	Sub-Form	Key Characteristics	Notes
Beaker	Funerary Domestic	Weak S-Profile	RD: 100-140mm Wall thickness: 6-13mm Dec: Incision Motifs: Herringbone, lattice	The number of reconstructable Beaker forms across the archipelago is limited
? Food Vessel?	Funerary	High-shouldered – Food Vessel Urns	RD: n/a Heights: 457-455mm Dec: Undecorated	Tentative attribution – previously assigned by Sheridan to Northern Isles group Deep bevelled rims recorded from multiple domestic sites could be related to Food Vessels
Bucket/ tub	Domestic	Straight walled – exact forms difficult to reconstruct	RD: 120-280mm Wall thickness: 6-13mm Dec: Incision, applied cordons Motifs: Herringbone,	Probable use in funerary contexts, but no recorded examples
Ridged jars	Domestic	Elongate, sinuous forms	RD: -266mm Dec: Incisions, raised/ applied cordons Wall thickness: 14mm Motifs: Herringbone, lattice	Examples find parallel to sites in the Western Isles. Some examples could reflect Grooved Ware influence. Recorded only at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5)

Table 6.7: *Summary of principal forms recorded from Shetland (see Table 1.1. for definition of site types)*

likely provided a key focus for these activities. The dispersed nature of sites probably suggests the existence of small groups living with clearly demarcated spaces as evidenced by the presence of extensive field boundaries (Turner, V. 2013: 31). The relationship of this activity to the limited funerary evidence is unclear. Whilst in the past several fragmentary vessels have

Form	Site Type	Sub-Form	Key Characteristics	Notes
Carinated Jars	Domestic	Indeterminate forms	RD: 180mm Dec: Raised/ applied cordons. Circular impressions at Stanydale Temple (SFI12)	Recorded only at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Stanydale Temple (SFI12)
Proto-collared	Domestic	Sinuous vessels with upper collar like element and shallow groove below	RD: 120-160mm Dec: Incisions, comb Wall thickness: 6-9mm Motifs: Herringbone, chevrons	Recorded only at H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) and Pund of Burland (SFI8)
Steatite	Funerary	*n/a*	Range of bucket/ tub shaped vessels	Comparable examples recorded from Orkney to south

Table 6.7 cont.: *Summary of principal forms recorded from Shetland*

been attributed to Beakers, a cautious approach to reconstruction was adopted. Considering this, these vessels have not been assigned to any specific category. As stressed in **Chapter 5**, the capacity of groups in Shetland to reterritorialize aspects of assemblages encountered elsewhere needs acknowledging. In this regard, aspects like form and decoration were adopted, but deployed in variety of specific ways. As discussed here, this resulted in a wide array for regional types, fulfilling a range of roles. These roles are primarily domestic with limited overlap with the funerary sphere. Based on present evidence, it seems that the use of ceramics in burials during the later 3rd millennium BC is rare. This appears to have changed at the end of the 3rd millennium, when pots were drawn into funerary practices to act as containers for the dead. These containers, notably the high shouldered forms from Culla Voe (SFI2), demonstrate continued links with other parts of Britain. Importantly, Shetland was not just adopting material but was during the later 3rd millennium engaged in active networks of exchange with Orkney. This includes the exchange of steatite which is increasingly employed in funerary contexts from the 2nd millennium onward in both Shetland and Orkney.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE ORKNEY ISLES

7.1 Introduction

Fifteen domestic and funerary sites were catalogued from Orkney (**Apps. A2.1** & **A2.2**). 60% of the sites were funerary in nature, comprising single vessels from cists and cemeteries (Fig. 7.22). Several other funerary sites were identified but lacked further contextual information and are not examined in detail (see **App. C3**). These include the possible cemetery sites at Gyre (Johnston, A.W. 1903) and Lyking (Marwick 1951). From Blows, Deerness, two clay vessels and a further steatite vessel were excavated but the dating of these is unknown (Grant 1933: 345). Grant suggested that a pot from a mound north of the Ring of Brodgar was similar to the smaller vessel from Blows (*ibid.*). From within this area a host of other cremation burials have been recorded, including the example from Lochview containing cremated remains and the base of a pot (Card 1998).

Six domestic assemblages were recorded, distributed across the archipelago, ranging from large assemblages to single vessels (Table 7.1). Four of the sites discussed in **Chapter 5** show evidence of continued activity. Pottery from the late 3rd millennium BC has been recorded at the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Tofts Ness (ORK19), the Links of Noltland (ORK10) and

Site	Code	Parent Context/ Sub-context	Reference
Rinyo	ORK16	Structures	Childe & Grant 1938, 1949
Links of Noltland	ORK10	Structures/ Midden	Clarke, D.V. & Sharples 1985; Moore & Wilson 2011
Crossiecrown	ORK6	Structures/ Midden	Card *et al.* 2016
Tofts Ness	ORK19	Structures	Dockrill 2007a
Ness of Brodgar	ORK11	Structures/ Midden	Towers *et al.* 2015
Braes Ha'Breck	ORK3	Quarry/ Quarry fill	Thomas, A. & Lee 2007, 2008, 2012

Table 7.1: *Principal domestic sites discussed in text (see **Apps. H1** & **H2** for definitions of parent and sub-contexts)*

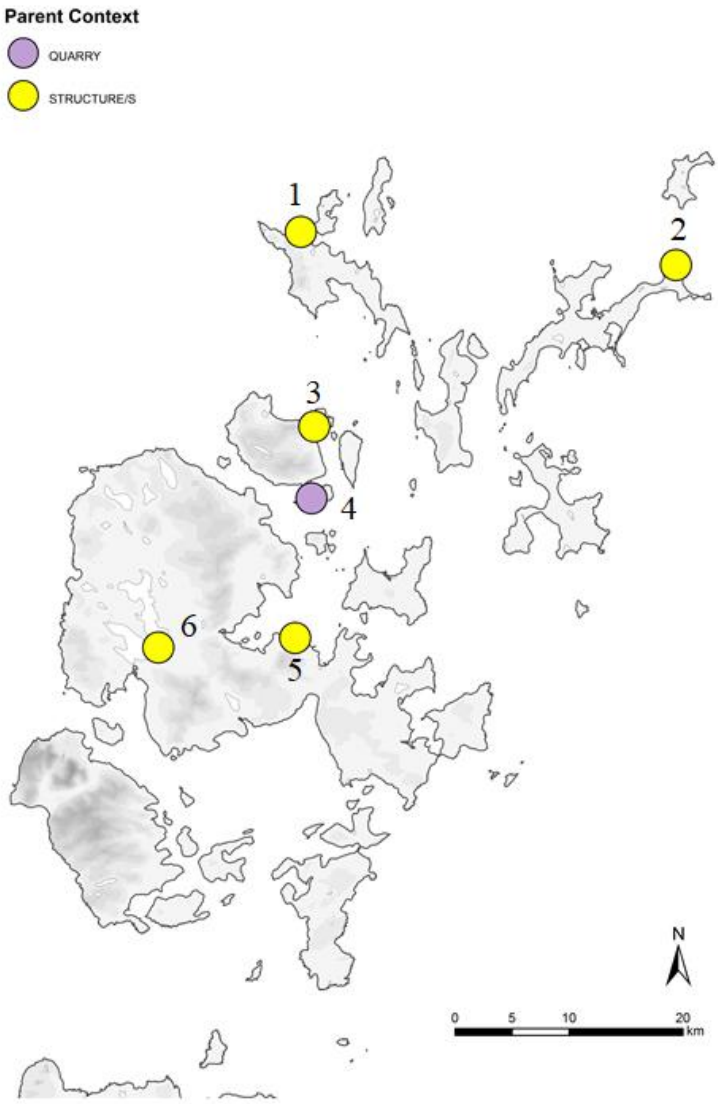

Figure 7.1: *Distribution of principal domestic pottery assemblages in Orkney discussed in the text*

Key: ***1.*** *Links of Noltland (ORK10), Westray,* ***2.*** *Tofts Ness (ORK19), Sanday* ***3.*** *Rinyo (ORK16), Rousay,* ***4.*** *Braes Ha'Breck (ORK3), Wyre* ***5.*** *Crossiecrown (ORK6), Mainland* ***6.*** *Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Mainland*

Crossiecrown (ORK6). Whilst no pottery has been recorded, sporadic activity appears to continue at Skara Brae until at least the end of the 3rd millennium BC (Thomas, A. 2016: 94; Clarke, D.V. 1976: 27; for a recent review see Shepherd, A. 2016) (Table 7.2). A single vessel was recorded from Rinyo (ORK16), whilst further finds of pottery were recorded from non-funerary deposits in chambered cairns (Fig. 7.36). In addition, a single vessel was recorded from a possible structured deposit at Barnhouse Odin (ORK1).

Site	Nature of activity	Date
Skara Brae, Mainland	• Burial from the upper fill of House 1 • Possible construction of Hut 8 (Downes & Thomas, A. 2014 82-84). Sporadic activity.	2024-1832 cal BC (A. Sheridan, Clarke, D.V. pers. comm.).
Pool, Sanday	• Low wall-built post abandonment • Barbed and tanged arrowheads	Phase 3.2 end *c.* 2460-2280 cal BC (MacSween *et al.* 2015: 15)
Bay of Stove, Sanday	• Settlement shift	mid-3rd millennium BC (Bond *et al.* 1995: 129)
Point of Buckquoy, Mainland	• Settlement shift	(Wainwright, F. 1989).
Muckquoy, Mainland	• sherds of Bronze Age ceramics	Continued settlement into the 2nd millennium BC (Richards, C. *et al.* 2016a: 2016: 248).

Table 7.2: *Other Orcadian sites with evidence of later 3rd millennium BC activity*

7.2 Domestic Sites

7.2.1 Nature of the evidence

Assemblages and single finds from domestic contexts were recorded from across the archipelago, with the bulk of the sites situated on the northern islands (Fig. 7.1) (**App. A2.1**). Later activity at Crossiecrown (ORK6) is focused on the Red House, the hearth [491] and the hollow [213] (Fig. 7.2). The hollow, infilled with rubble and stone could represent the remains of a timber house, whilst [491] could have been associated with a further structure (Card *et al.* 2016: 193). Following the collapse of the Red House, a wall was constructed over the remains.

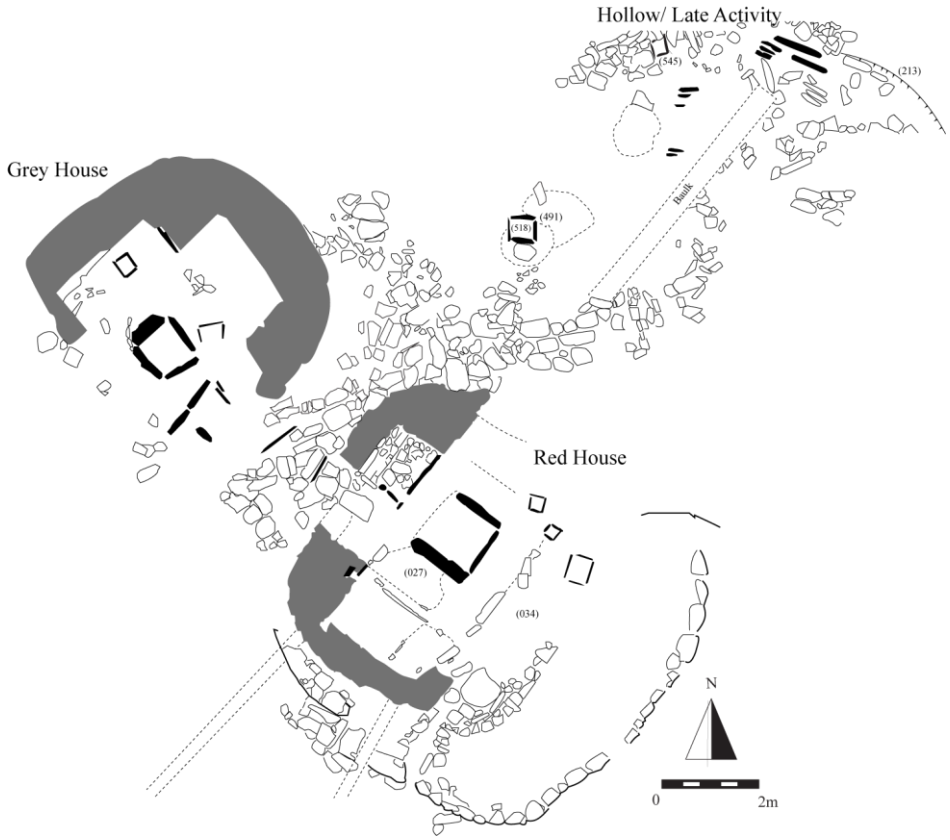

Figure 7.2: *Simplified plan of Crossiecrown (ORK6), Mainland, showing key features discussed in text (after Richards, C. & Jones, R. 2016)*

Figure 7.3: *Simplified plan of Phase 3, Structure 2 Tofts Ness (ORK19), Sanday (after Dockrill 2007a: Illus 2.18)*

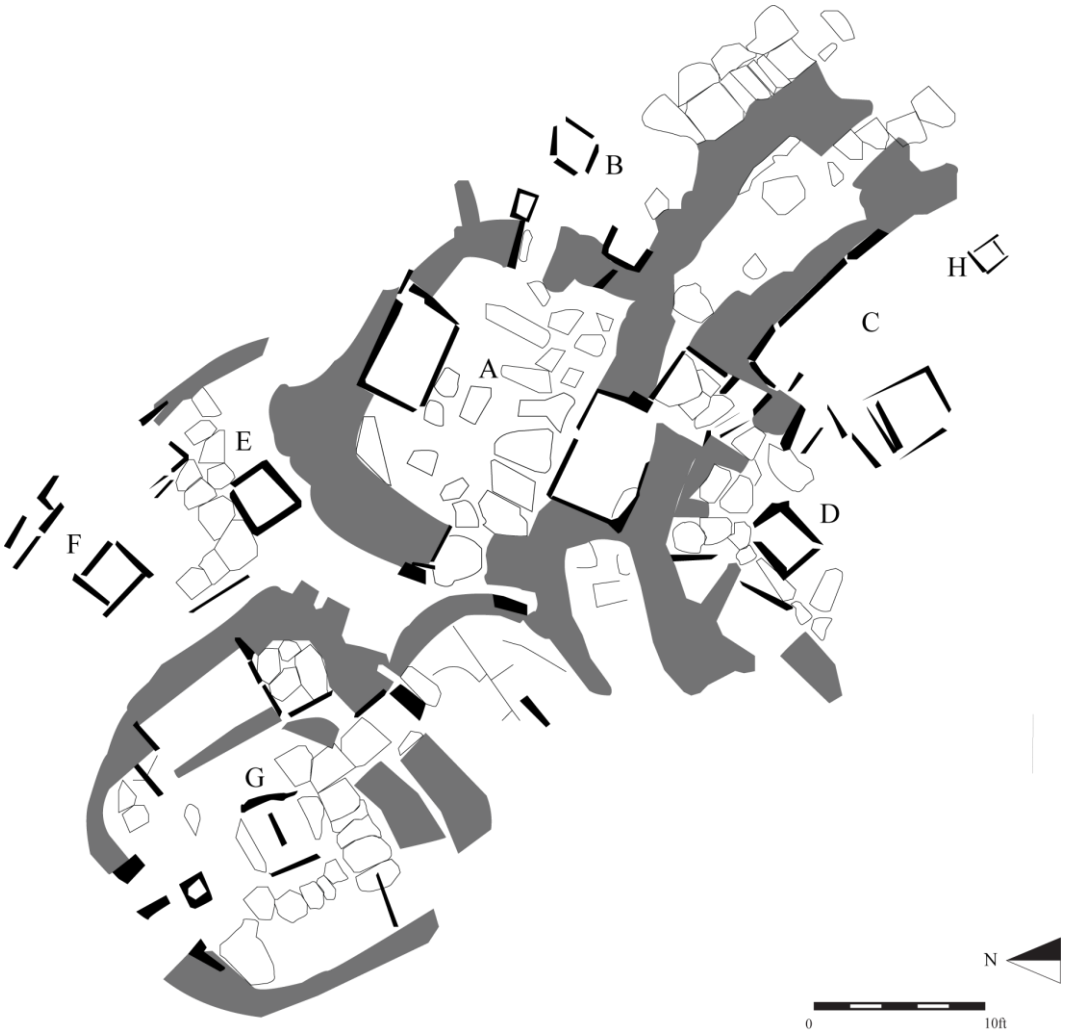

Figure 7.4: *Plan of structures at Rinyo (ORK16), Rousay (after Childe & Grant 1939: Plate II)*

A similar situation occurs at Pool, where a boundary wall is built across part of the site (Hunter, J. 2007: 60). Phase 3 At Tofts Ness (ORK19) comprised a cellular building, closely associated with a series of midden tips (Dockrill 2007b: 31) (Fig. 7.3). Later 3rd millennium BC pottery was recovered from the upper midden deposits in Area A and B, and Structure 2. The later phases of Tofts Ness (ORK19) are characterized by a marked change in the ceramic assemblage with decorated pottery being employed (MacSween 2007c: 284). It is unclear if activity at the site is continuous or if there is a break in occupation as seen at other 3rd millennium sites (MacSween *et al.* 2015: 23). The chronology of the site is further discussed in **Section 7.2.3**. In the late 1980s at the Links of Noltland (ORK10) a rounded structure (Str. 18), known as the 'Grobust' house, with a joining corridor and a series of extensive midden deposits was excavated (Clarke, D.V. & Sharples 1985; Sheridan 1999*)*. From Trench C sherds of at least two Beakers were recovered (Moore & Wilson 2011: 14-5; A. Sheridan pers.

comm.). The material from the Links of Noltland (ORK10), discussed here, comprises only these vessels and does not include material from recent investigations (see Moore & Wilson 2011). At Rinyo (ORK16) and the Braes Ha'Breck (ORK3), there is limited evidence for continued activity. Due to plough truncation this activity is difficult to detect, except for the incised bucket/ tub vessel from the quarry fill (A. Thomas pers. comm.). At Rinyo (ORK16), a single sherd of an s-profile Beaker was recovered from the entranceway of Structure A, "*6 inches above paving*" (Childe & Grant 1938: 26)[1] (Fig. 7.4).

7.2.2 Tofts Ness (ORK19)

The Assemblage

The Phase 2/3 assemblage at Tofts Ness (ORK19) comprises 782 sherds, representing a minimum of 336 vessels, a quarter of which were decorated (MacSween 2007c: 262). Straight or slightly barrel-shaped profile vessels were common, with an average rim diameter of 200mm (*ibid.*). Large vessels with wall thicknesses over 13mm were rare, forming a small percentage of the overall assemblage. Medium vessels, with wall thicknesses of 10-12mm, were common, forming the bulk of the assemblage. Small vessels, with thicknesses less than 10mm were like large vessels rare, restricted primarily to examples with wall thicknesses of 7-8mm (Dockrill 2007a: Illus 7.16). Like the earlier assemblage, rims tend to be flat, simple, plain or sport an internal bevel (MacSween 2007a) (Fig.7.5).

Vessels were decorated principally by incision, with complex herringbone, chevron and parallel horizontal designs employed (Fig. 7.5). Among these are vessels with distinct banded decoration (Fig. 7.6). The use of bands and chevron motifs finds close parallel with H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5) (Figs. 6.15 & 6.17). Decoration tended to cover the whole of the body and in several cases was extended to the lip of the vessel (*e.g.* TN1758, TN2692, and TN1240). Two vessels were decorated with cord impressions, employing motifs comparable to those at Crossiecrown (ORK6). Further tentative comparisons for these decorative modes can be found to the north at the Pund of Burland (SFI8) and Sumburgh Airport (SFI13) (Figs. 6.26 & 6.28). Parallels to pottery from Shetland are reinforced by two steatite sherds from Phase 3, and an additional abraded fragment from Phase 2 (Smith, A. 2007b: 285). Steatite is employed to a limited degree as a tempering agent in the Phase 3 assemblage, having first being used in the late Neolithic Phase 2 (*ibid.*). As will be further seen in the case of funerary

[1] *This description likely refers to the unblocked west entrance, rather than the east which was blocked with horizontal slabs (Childe & Grant 1939: 10) (Fig. 7.4).*

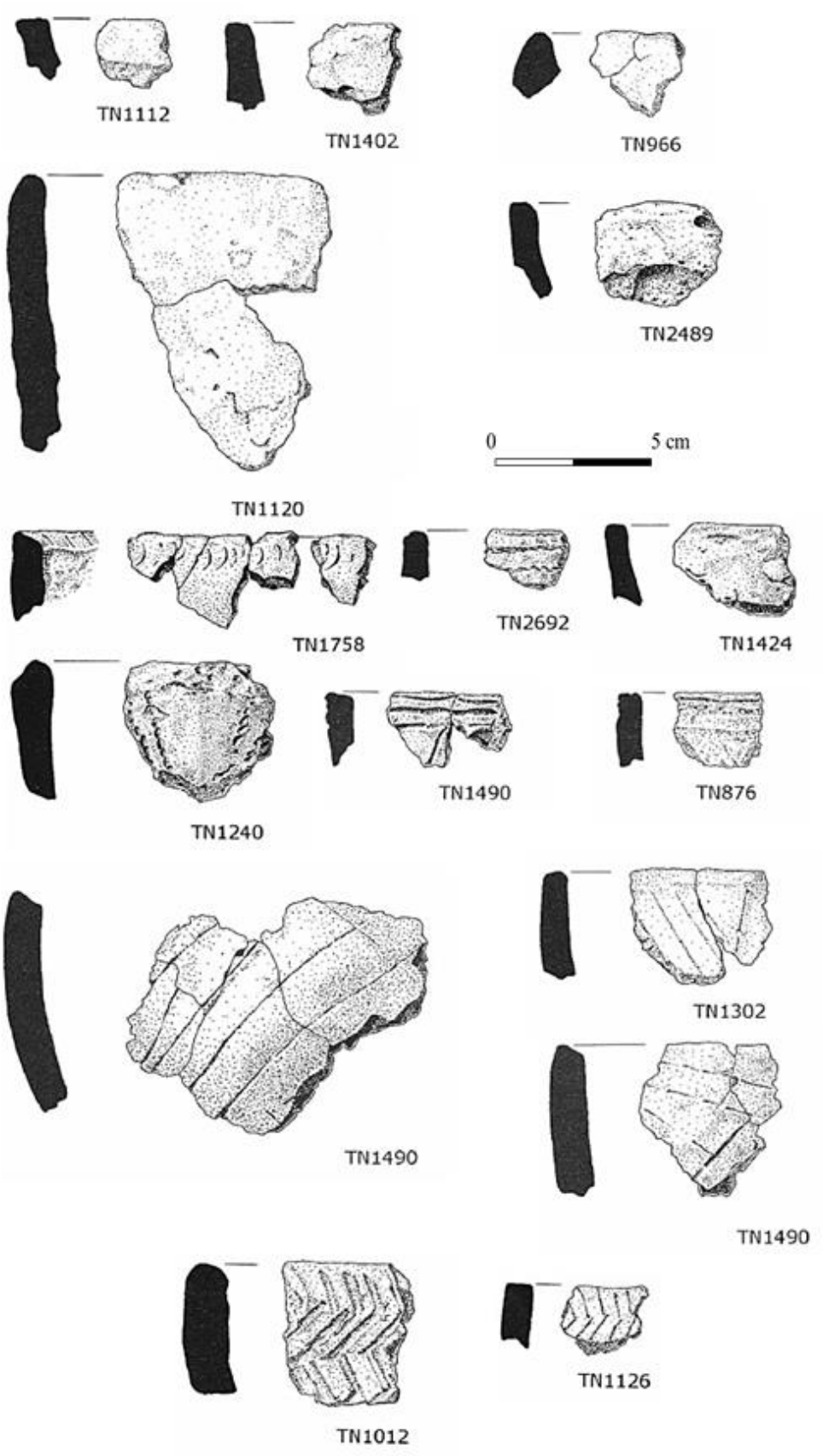

Figure 7.5: *Selection of Phase 3 pottery from Tofts Ness (ORK19), Sanday (Dockrill 2007a: 7.23.-7.2.10)*

sites, this material was imported into the region from Shetland, and is closely linked to changes in funerary practice (Smith, A. 2007b: 287). Fabrics demonstrate a degree of consistency with the preceding phase, with sandy clays preferred. Thin section analysis showed that these clays were likely sourced locally (MacSween 2007a: 260). There is though a slight decrease in the range of fabrics employed during this phase (*ibid.*). Overall, it can be argued that there is a relative degree of continuity in potting at the site, with fabrics and wall thicknesses remaining consistent. The primary change instead lies in the use of decorated vessels, with motifs that echo those from Shetland.

Ceramic repertoire and use

The focus on medium-sized vessels suggests a range of forms employed in the preparation and serving of foodstuffs. Faunal data from the site shows a focus on cattle alongside the exploitation of a wide variety of terrestrial and marine resources (*cf.* Dockrill 2007a: Chp. 6). The majority of medium-sized vessels showed evidence for sooting, which was generally absent among small and large vessels. Several vessels with wall thicknesses of 8mm showed signs of sooting, suggesting they could have been used in cooking[2]. The potentially low number of storage vessels is likely due to the lower breakage rates that occur among larger vessels.

As noted, there is an apparent stability in potting technology and this can be extended to function. The primary change in the assemblage instead relates to the decoration of the vessels. One of the recorded steatite sherds showed evidence of sooting, whilst the rim fragment did not show signs of use. As suggested by Smith, these vessels may not have been intended for domestic use. Instead, vessels may have been prepared at the site for use in nearby funerary monuments (*ibid.*). As will be discussed, this suggests that Tofts Ness (ORK19) could have acted as a maritime haven, in a similar fashion to coastal dune sites such as Luce Sands (Bradley *et al.* 2015), acting as a point of exchange and contact with Shetland. Changes in the ceramic assemblage at Tofts Ness (ORK19) could stem from these relations.

Discussion

Despite problems of stratigraphy and phasing, several key observations can be drawn from the assemblage at Tofts Ness (ORK19). The first is to reiterate the undecorated nature of the assemblage during the earlier 3rd millennium. Whilst undecorated sherds are known from other early 3rd millennium sites, their role has not been fully considered. Functionally, these vessels

[2] *Based on original data provided by A. MacSween*

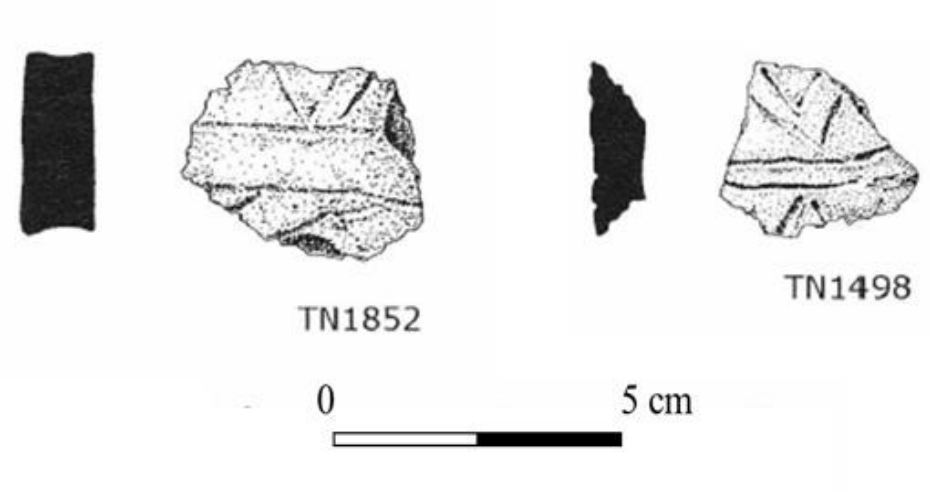

Figure 7.6: *Chevron decorated sherds from Phase 2 Tofts Ness (ORK19), Sanday (Dockrill 2007a: Illus. 7.2.10)*

- like the Phase 2/3 assemblage - were employed in a range of preparatory and serving roles. Storage vessels are present but occur in small numbers. Statistically, it is difficult to compare this against other sites, including the nearby site of Pool. The absence of decoration among the Tofts Ness (ORK19) assemblage can be explained through the wider relations in which Grooved Ware was involved. Unlike Pool, large scale consumptive events may not have occurred at Tofts Ness (ORK19). Alternatively, inhabitants from Tofts Ness (ORK19) may have travelled to other sites to participate in these events (*e.g.* Van de Noort 2011). It is tempting to link the appearance of decoration to the use of steatite during Phase 2/3, and the role of Tofts Ness (ORK19) as a point of exchange. Its coastal position and proximity to Fair Isle would have made it an ideal stopping point on the journey across the Orkney archipelago to Shetland (see Van de Noort 2011: 140-1). Through these relations with Shetland the position and role of Tofts Ness (ORK19) saw modification during the late 3rd and early 2nd millennium. These developments can on a larger scale be tied into wider changes taking place across the archipelago during the late 3rd millennium. These will be further examined in **Section 7.7**.

7.2.3 Crossiecrown (ORK6)

The Assemblage

At Crossiecrown (ORK6), bucket/ tub vessels form the bulk of the assemblage. These are employed alongside a small group of probable Beakers (Jones, A. *et al.* 2016) (Table 7.3). The rationale for assigning vessels to one tradition or the other is unclear, although – as

	Phase	ENV	
Grooved Ware	Late – in association with Red House, deposits in Midden Trench 1	337	Bucket/ tub vessels – variety of techniques applied and incised schemes.
'Beaker'	Occupation levels – later phase of Red House Abandonment deposits Midden Trench 1	18	Bucket/ tub vessel and Beakers (sinuous) forms. Variety of decorative motifs and techniques. Comb and twisted cord present.

Table 7.3: *Principal late 3rd millennium BC vessel groups at Crossiecrown (ORK6), Mainland, as defined by A. Jones (see Jones, A. et al. 2016: 333-4)*

stressed by Jones – these vessels are part of a process of innovation (2007: 132) (see **Sections 2.5.2 & 3.3**). These pots reflect a blurring of traditions and processes, citing both past and present potting traditions, with some of the Beakers representing experimentation within the existing Grooved Ware repertoire (Jones, A. *et al.* 2016: 34; Jones, A. 2007: 135). Importantly, potting technology shows little change across time with the consistent use of coil and mortice and tenon techniques across the entire assemblage (Jones, A. *et al.* 2016: 351)

Following the definitions set out in **Chapter 4,** the bulk of these vessels are assigned to the bucket/ tub category in this thesis. These overlap in part with the incised wares from Tofts Ness (ORK19), with an emphasis on incised chevrons. The bulk of the later pottery, including the greater part of Jones' Beaker group, and examples of Grooved Ware[3], came from the final occupation deposits in the Red House (Tables 7.3 & 7.4). These included the probable Beaker SF229 from the midden in Trench 3 (022) (Fig. 7.8). SF229 sports a rounded rim with an external cordon, creating a steep external bevel. This narrow edge is decorated with horizontal cord impressions with diagonal infill. The remainder of the vessels are not illustrated, limiting further discussion of form. SF444, 487, 434, is stated to have a pronounced s-shaped shoulder (Jones, A. *et al.* 2016: 348), whilst SF431 could be an all-over decorated Beaker (Fig. 7.7). Several further cord impressed sherds were recovered from the occupation spreads (034), (011), (029), including SF291 and SF514.

[3] *Two thirds of the Grooved Ware came from within Midden 2 deposits, but it is unclear how much of this material relates to the upper deposits where Beakers were found.*

	PG	SF	Description	Context	Phase	Description
Red House	1	989	Beaded rim, lozenge pattern executed in comb (similar pattern to Grooved Ware SF150)	(507)	Final occupation Red House	Layer in Red House interior
	2	938, 1180	Rounded out-turned rim			
	1	83,84	Base sherds	(027)		Occupation spread adjacent to hearth 018 red house
	1	291	Vertical twisted cord impression, near rim	029		Upper fill (?) of stone box 015 Red House
	2	447, 467, 468, 470, 479	Incised vessel, pointed notched rim – diagonal incisions	(309) fill of [312]		Fill of pit cut into floor of Red House – sherds possibly found in (003)
	4	441,446	Rounded inverted rim			
	1	444,487,434	Pronounced s-shaped shoulder			
	2	411,414,415,425	Base sherds	T3 (022)		Clay surface northeast recess Red House
	3	504	Base sherds			
	1	169,219	Base sherds, faint cord impressions			
	4	228,230	Beaded rim			
	1	229	Rounded rim, external cordon, body decorated with twisted cord	T3 (208)	Post Red House	Fill of hollow 213 Red House
	5	514	Horizontal twisted cord impressions around belly	(011)	Final phase Red House	Deposit associated with stone box 013 Red House – general occupation spread
	5	431	Horizontal bands of twisted cord	034		Occupation Red House (?) – 'upper context'
	5	17, 19, 165, 241	Impressed sherds	003	Post red House contemporary (?) with 213	Collapse of Red House / abandonment (incl. (006)
	139	1587	Incised chevron pattern (003)			
Trench 1 Midden	93	1399	Beaded rim	(002)		Midden spread Trench 1 above basal layer (058)
	125	1605, 1457, 1512, 1437, 1390	Vertical twisted cord decorated vessel			

Table 7.4: *List of later vessels labelled 'Beaker' from pottery assemblage at Crossiecrown (ORK6), Mainland. PG denotes the pot group, SF the small find number (Based on data in Jones, A. et al. 2016 & Jones, A. unpub).*

Figure 7.7: *Cord Impressed sherds from Crossiecrown (ORK6), Mainland (Author)*

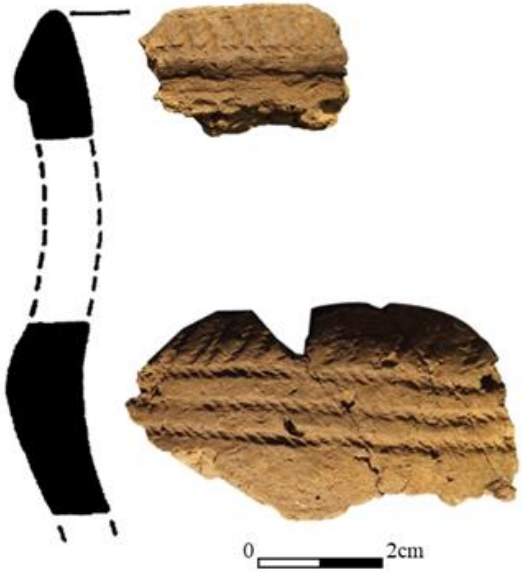

Figure 7.8: *SF229 from Crossiecrown (ORK6), Mainland (after Jones 2007: Fig 15, photos Author)*

Alongside the probable Beaker fragments, sherds of a bucket/ tub vessel, PG2 (SF447, 467, 468, 470, 479), with an internally bevelled rim was recovered from [309], the fill of a pit cut into the floor of the Red House (Fig. 7.2) (Table 7.4). The rim is decorated with a series of notches, which occur among earlier 3rd millennium BC bucket/ tub vessels (*e.g.* Hunter, J. & MacSween 1991: 991), whilst the area below is decorated with diagonal incisions cut by horizontal incisions (Fig. 7.9). From [507], a layer within the interior of the Red House, came further sherds of a bucket/ tub vessel, SF989. The vessel, labelled as a Beaker, comprises the

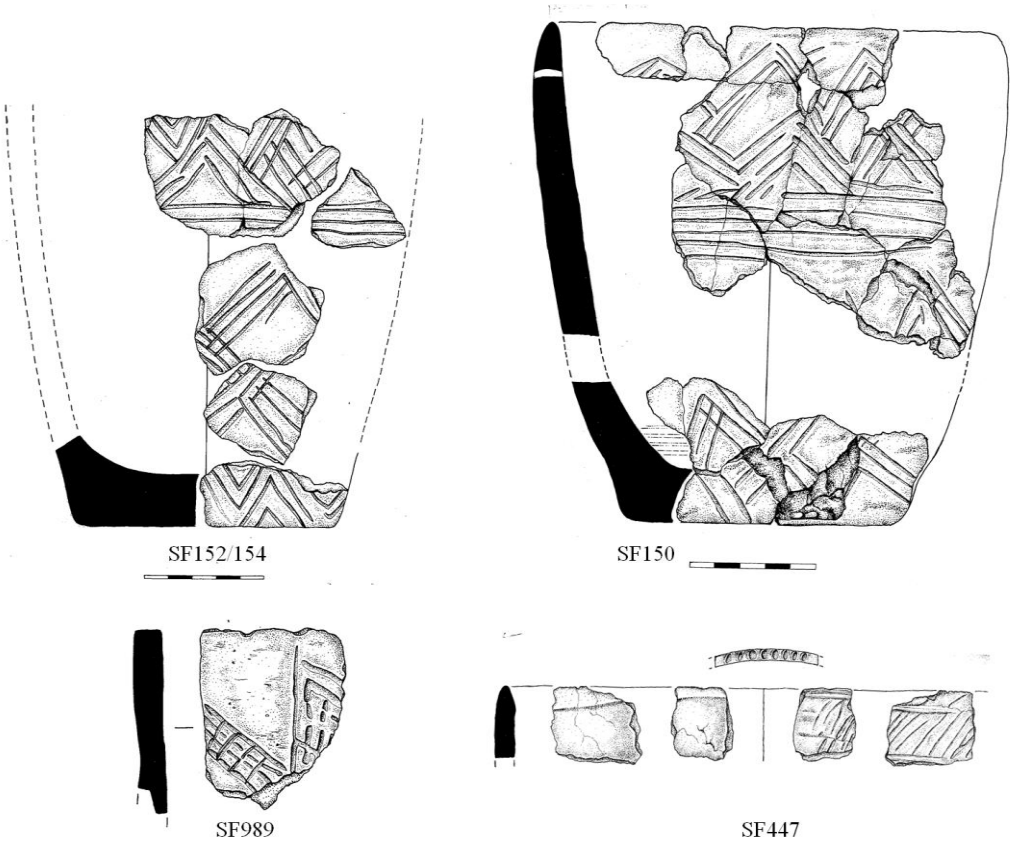

Figure 7.9: *Decorated bucket/ tub vessels, SF989 SF150 152/ 154 SF447, from Crossiecrown (ORK6), Mainland (after Jones, A. et al. 2016)*

upper part of a bucket/ tub vessel decorated with infilled triangle comb and cord impressions (Fig, 7.9). Whilst twisted cord impressions are found on Grooved Ware to the south, it is not recorded among the decorative repertoire of Orcadian Grooved Ware (Scholma-Mason pers. obs.) and is likely a later introduction to the region. From the upper deposits, associated with the collapse and abandonment of the Red House came, SF150 and SF152, 154 decorated with incised chevrons (Fig 7.9). The decoration recalls earlier incised designs at Pool (Fig. 5.15) and among the later sherds from Tofts Ness (ORK19), notably TN1498 and TN1852 (Fig. 7.6). The zoned arrangement is also noted at Rinyo (ORK16) (Fig. 7.11). From the same deposits came SF17, 19,165, 241 with vertical lenticular impressions on the shoulder and SF1587 decorated with a faint incised chevron pattern.

Function

In contrast to the other regions under study, there is a small body of residue data available for the Crossiecrown (ORK6) assemblage based on two samples: SF229 and SF1093 (Jones, A. *et al.* 2016: Table 11.7.2). Samples show a continued use of dairy products, but owing to the

	Pot Group	Context	Description
SF 1269, 1293,	34	2	Wall thickness: 1.3cm (illustration)
SF 449, 440, 456	1	34	Wall thickness: 1cm.
SF 64	4	34	Wall thickness: 2cm
SF 476, 441, 436	7	34	Wall thickness: 1cm.
SF 533	6	34	Wall thickness: 0.7cm. Rounded, everted rim. RD: 14cm.
SF150	1	3	Wall thickness: 1cm. Basal thickness: 1.7cm. BD: 11cm. Pointed rim. RD: 19cm. (illustration – incised chevron)
SF 83, 84	1	27	Wall thickness: 0.7cm. Basal thickness: 0.9cm. BD: 10cm.
SF 414, 411, 425, 415,	2	22	Wall thickness: 1cm. Basal thickness: 1.4cm. BD: 16cm.

Table 7.5: *Grooved Wares found in same contexts as Beakers at Crossiecrown (ORK6), Mainland (Data after Jones, A. unpub)*

size of the sample, more detailed analysis is not possible (Table 7.6). This limited information can be argued to represent a degree of continuity within domestic practice. Environmental data from Crossiecrown (ORK6), shows a preference for cattle and deer along with sheep and goat in association with later depositional activity (001-003) (Smith, C. & Roberts, J. 2016: 488). Jones suggests that the presence of 'Beakers' implies a shift in focus with smaller vessels employed in the serving of food and drink. In itself this may not be a major novelty, as highly decorated small Grooved Ware vessels are well known from across the region (**Section 5.2.4**). Instead, changes in decoration and contexts of use and deposition signal changes in wider ideas of consumption. As at Tofts Ness (ORK19), this could be tied into the decline of large scale consumptive events during the later 3rd millennium, with a shift towards small-scale events centred on the house.

Discussion

In summary, the continuation in potting technology – and, to a degree, vessel form – suggest a series of graded changes. Unfortunately, it is not possible to assess the composition of the

	Ruminant Dairy	Animal fat	Ruminant Adipose	Ruminant Adipose and/ or dairy fat
Grooved Ware	19, 150, 899	19S, 1042, 1042S	808, 937, 938, 938S	
Beaker	229			1093

Table 7.6: *Lipid assignments for Grooved Ware and Beaker from Crossiecrown (ORK6), Mainland (Jones, A. et al. 2016: Table 11.7.2)*

assemblage by phase hampering a contextual understanding of changes in the overall assemblage over time. The presence of Beakers does mark a departure from preceding forms, but these are the exception rather than the norm. As suggested by Jones we can envisage a fluid series of ceramic categories blending and blurring a range of aspects. This situation was noted in the case of pottery from H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5), where a suite of regionally distinct forms was defined (Table 6.2). As at Tofts Ness (ORK19), this is expressed primarily in the employment of a range of new motifs and decorative techniques. The use of twisted cord on a select number of vessels evokes parallels with Beaker pottery to the south. The banded decoration and use of multiple chevrons finds parallel at Tofts Ness (ORK19) and sites in Shetland, including H1 Ness of Gruting (SFI5). This zoning occurs widely on other Beakers including the sherd from Rinyo (ORK16).

7.2.4 Links of Noltland (ORK10)

The Assemblage

At the Links of Noltland (ORK10) a comparable overlap and mixing of forms can be seen in the later phases. From the Grobust structure at least two Beakers were recovered from Trench C (Fig. 7.10). The first of these, GX64-66, is a short-necked vessel with a defined angular profile, with a rim diameter of *c.*170mm. The form is comparable to examples from domestic assemblages in the Western Isles (**Section 2.5.2**). The exterior of the vessel is decorated with bands of rough incised herringbone with horizontal borders. The second vessel, GX69, is larger with a rim diameter of *c.*240mm. The profile bows out slightly with a well-defined neck. The exterior is decorated with vertical herringbone similar to sherds from Tofts Ness (ORK19).

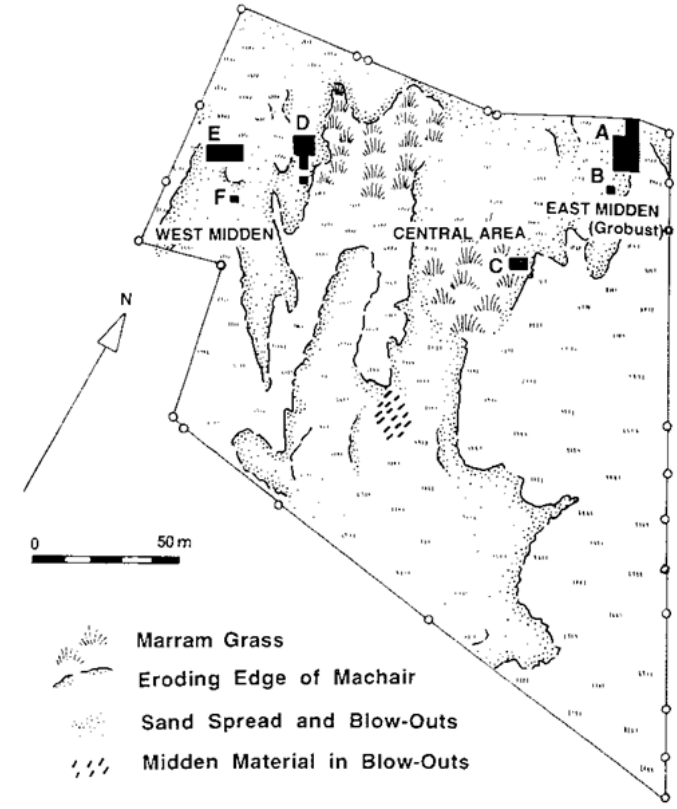

Figure 7.10: *Plan of excavated areas at the Links of Noltland (ORK10), Westray (Sheridan 1999: 114).*

Figure 7.11: *Beaker sherd HDA99 from Rinyo (ORK16), Rousay (© N.M.S)*

Discussion

The precise nature and relationships of the assemblage are difficult to ascertain owing to the site not being fully published. As at Tofts Ness (ORK19) and Crossiecrown (ORK6), there is a potential shift towards incised schemes during the period. The presence of distinct necked vessels suggests influences from Beaker ceramics, but the relationship of these vessels to the overall assemblage is unclear.

7.2.5 Rinyo (ORK16)

The Assemblage

In comparison to other Orcadian sites the later material from Rinyo (ORK16) is restricted both in terms of assemblage size and stratigraphic information (*cf.* discussion in Clarke, D.V. 1983, and **App. C1**). The report states that the Beaker (HDA99) was juxtaposed with sherds of a Grooved Ware vessel with a scalloped rim (Childe & Grant 1938: 26; Childe *unpub.*). The exact relationship of the sherd to the chronology of the site is unclear (Clarke, D.V. 1983: 48), but could represent a structured deposit associated with the final phases of the site. Similar deposits were noted at Crossiecrown (ORK6) where SF150 and SF152, SF154 were placed into the upper midden (Jones, A. *et al.* 2016: 355). HDA99 sports a distinctive sinuous profile divided into two zones. The upper comprises three bands of horizontal comb impression with two to three further bands on the belly, with broad incised chevrons between (Fig. 7.11). One further sherd worth noting is a single sherd, decorated with maggots. This technique is not noted elsewhere within the Orkney Isles but, as with HDA99, its findspot and chronology are unclear. One further sherd recovered from between the inner and casing walls of Chamber D, is described as "*part of the ring-shaped base of a vessel"* (Childe & Grant 1938: 25). In the centre of the base is a hole, the edge of which had been carefully finished before firing. The space between the hole and the walls was decorated with triangles filled with perforations. The precise nature of the object and its relationship to the assemblage is unclear[4].

Discussion

As with sites from Shetland, the material from Rinyo (ORK16) is difficult to sequence, due to lack of information regarding find spots. The position of the Beaker sherd recalls the structured

[4] *The motifs find parallel among both Grooved Ware and Beaker, one tentative possibility is that the disc represents the remains of small vessel akin to accessory cups. Such vessels are not unknown in Orkney, with a single example recorded from South Ronaldsay (Fig. 2.20) and a further probable example from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK10) (Copper pers comm.)*

deposits noted at Crossiecrown (ORK6), and it may be the case that similar closing deposits occur at Rinyo (ORK16) in association with Beaker vessels. This need not imply that the appearance of Beaker pottery signalled the end of the site. Instead, this indicates that at the time the closing deposits were laid, Beakers were in use across Orkney. This includes the previously discussed examples from Crossiecrown (ORK6) and Links of Noltland (ORK10). Unlike the other Beaker material from the archipelago, the sherd finds close parallel in terms of form and decoration from further south, and thus stands out from the more mixed Beaker material. A cursory examination of the Rinyo (ORK16) assemblage did not reveal any further sherds, raising the question of whether the vessel was deposited in a fragmentary state as part of a token deposit. The presence of the edging fragment is difficult to place within the overall sequence of Rinyo (ORK16), its precise form and function are unclear.

7.2.6 Braes Ha'Breck (ORK3)

The Assemblage

At the Braes of Ha'Breck (ORK3), a single incised vessel stands out from the broader 4th to early 3rd millennium BC assemblage, including examples of Unstan Bowls (A. Thomas pers. comm.). The sherds recovered from the quarry cutting (Fig. 7.12) derive from a single vessel decorated with parallel rows of incised chevrons (Fig. 7.13). The decoration is akin to examples from Tofts Ness (ORK19) (Fig. 7.6), Crossiecrown (ORK6) (Fig. 7.9) and from sites in Shetland (Fig 6.15). The profile, despite its fragmentary condition, suggests a bucket/ tub vessel with angled walls.

Discussion

The single incised vessel fits into the wider assemblage of incised wares recorded from across Orkney during this time. The dating of the quarry fill closely overlaps with late dates from Tofts Ness (ORK19) and Crossiecrown (ORK6) (Fig. 7.16).

7.2.7 The Ness of Brodgar (ORK11)

The Assemblage

On initial analysis, several sherds from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11) show marked differences from the larger Grooved Ware assemblage. These include the incised sherd, SFN15469, from the top of a large bone spread around Str10, associated with a date of *c.*2300 cal BC (Fig.7.14). From within Str. 12 came a vessel with impressed decoration, which could date to a similar period (R. Towers pers. comm.) (Fig. 7.15). From around the wall in the upper

Figure 7.12: *Quarry feature at the Braes Ha'Breck (ORK3), Wyre (© ORCA)*

Figure 7.13: *Incised sherds from the quarry fill at the Braes Ha'Breck (ORK3), Wyre (© ORCA)*

midden levels of Str. 12 came several further sherds that could date post 2500 BC (R. Towers pers. comm.). These include a large vessel decorated with multiple cordons in excess of those normally found on Grooved Ware. At present, the site is still under excavation and little else can be added to this brief sketch.

Figure 7.14: *SFN15469 from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Mainland (© ORCA)*

Figure 7.15: *Impressed sherd from the upper levels of Str. 10 Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Mainland (© ORCA)*

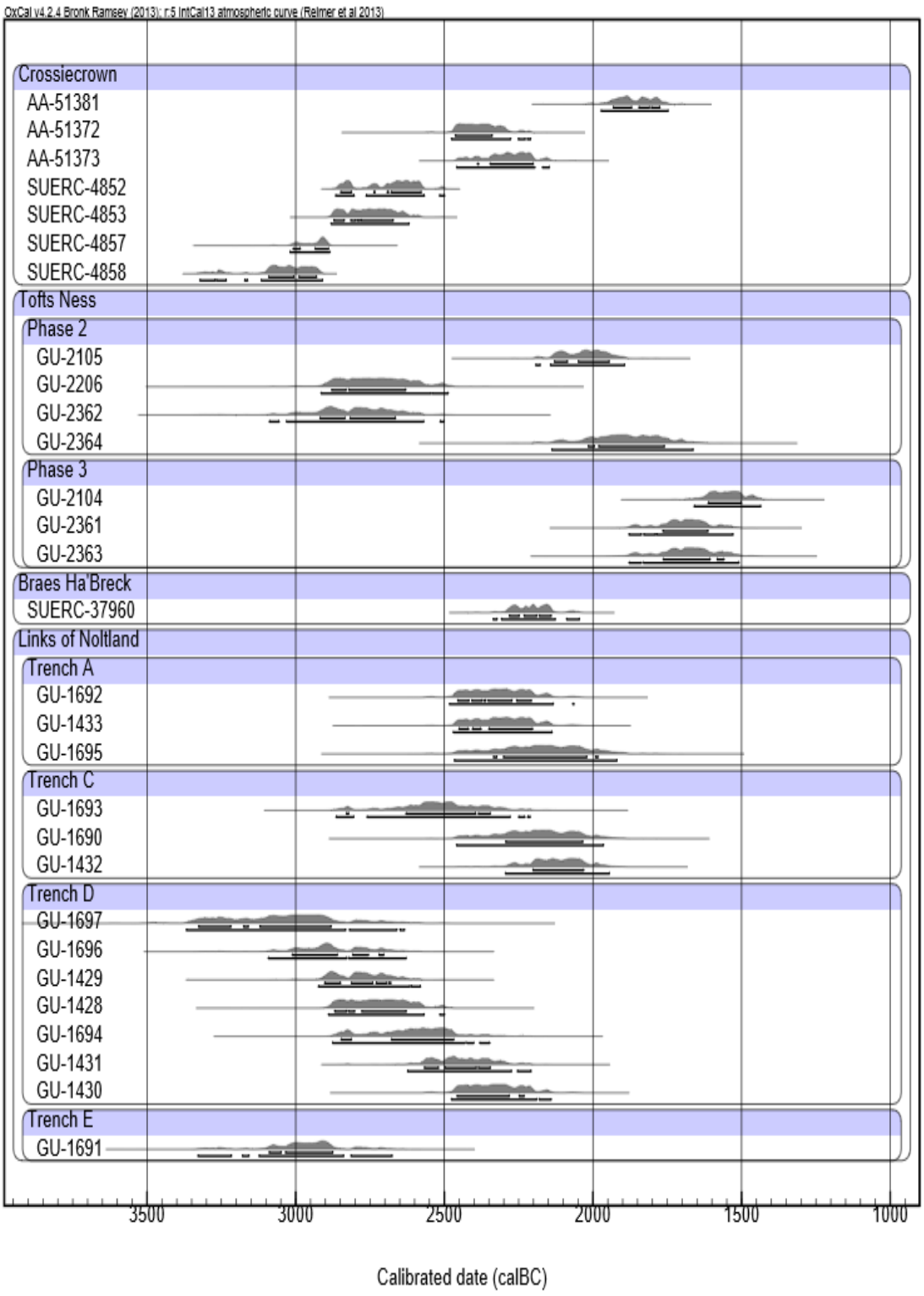

Figure 7.16: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for domestic sites in Orkney discussed in text (see* ***App. F2*** *for details)*

Discussion

The transition from heavily decorated Grooved Ware to incised vessels at the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11) is at present unclear. Whilst suggestions in the past have related these changes to the emergence of Beaker pottery, the use of incised schemes is part of a wider shift seen across Orkney. As noted, these vessels find parallel in Shetland, and it is possible that changes in ceramics emerge from the relations between the two areas. These ideas of change and emergent categories will be further examined during this thesis.

7.2.8 Chronology

Whilst all the sites have radiocarbon dates, the degree of association between these and the ceramic assemblage is unclear in several cases. The dates from Tofts Ness (ORK19) Phase 2 cover a lengthy period, overlapping between Phases 1.3 and 2 (Ambers 2007: 144-5). Recently it has been suggested that reworked bone from Phase 1 was incorporated in the samples for GU-2206 and GU-2362 (MacSween *et al.* 2015: 23). This could imply that – instead of continuous occupation, as originally suggested (Dockrill 2007b: 39) – there may have been a break, with Phase 2 corresponding to a shorter period of occupation starting *c.*2000 cal BC (MacSween *et al.* 2015: 23). Phase 3 falls in the first half of the 2nd millennium BC, during which incised and to a lesser extent, cord impressed pottery, are used alongside undecorated vessels (Dockrill 2007b: 32). Similar problems of phasing and sequence are encountered at Crossiecrown (ORK6), but current evidence implies a similar sequence as at Tofts Ness (ORK19). Occupation of the Red House continues until *c.* 1980-1740 cal BC (AA-51381), the cord impressed sherds SF291, 514, 431 could pre-date these final deposits, alongside SF447, 467, 468, 470, 479. These deposits are dated by AA-51373 [315] and AA-51372 [012], derived from the ash spreads associated with hearth [018]. [315] equates to a lower hearth deposit, whilst [012] is the latest ash spread (Card *et al.* 2016: 178). SF229 appears to fall later being associated with the infill of the hollow [213]. In summary, based on the tentative evidence, cord impressed vessels at Crossiecrown (ORK6) could equate to a short phase of occupation associated with the final phase of the Red House dated to 2470-2140 cal BC (Card *et al.* 2016: 178). This phase is associated with the continued use of decorated bucket/ tub vessels. The hollow post-dating the Red House could be associated with a similar mix of vessels, including the probable Beaker SF229.

The incised sherd SF15469 from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11) is associated with the bone spread linked to the final phases of Str. 10, dated to *c.* 2300 cal BC (R. Towers pers. comm.). Current dating suggests a final phase of activity *c.*2280–2065 cal BC (N. Card pers. comm.

see Thomas, A. 2016: Figure 113 for a recent summary of dates). This date derives from the large animal bone deposits associated with the decommissioning of Str. 10 (Towers *et al.* 2015: 22; see Mainland *et al.* 2014). The interrelationship of this sherd to the applied Grooved Ware remains an open question, but a degree of overlap can be posited. An overlap of applied and incised vessels appears to occur at Crossiecrown (ORK6), but the single date from the Braes Ha'Breck (ORK3) (Fig. 7.16) corroborates the notion that bucket/ tub vessels decorated with incised motifs were in continued use into the later 3rd and early 2nd millennium BC. This could apply to some of the pottery from the Links of Noltland (ORK10), but several of the dates have large deviations – in several cases up to 100 years, affecting the confidence with which we can assign certain sherds to chronological periods (*cf.* **App. F2**)[5].

The available chronological evidence provides a tentative framework in which to situate the continued use of bucket/ tub vessels. This includes an increased preference for incised chevron and herringbone motifs from around the 24th century BC, as evidenced at Crossiecrown (ORK6), but as noted the precise degree of association is unclear. As in Shetland, Beakers are rare in domestic contexts. Given the similarities with Shetland, it is probable that the use of Beakers falls post-2300 BC, with Grooved Ware, or bucket/ tub forms continuing in use until this point. Plain bucket/ tub forms persist into the 2nd millennium being found in both domestic and funerary contexts.

7.2.9 Discussion: Domestic Assemblages, types and roles

The six recorded assemblages are a heterogeneous mix of forms and styles, displaying continuity and discontinuity with the preceding period. Taking the information outlined above as a whole we can detect several key trends in the way pottery is categorised and employed in a domestic context. The primary shift is an apparent resurgence in incised decoration comprising lightly or deeply scored chevrons. There does not appear to be a corresponding change in forms, although at Tofts Ness (ORK19) there was an increased emphasis on barrel shaped vessels (MacSween 2007c: 262). Chronologically these incised vessels form a discreet group, which are categorised in similar ways to their predecessors. Underlying changes in decoration there is continuity in potting technology with late incised wares being constructed in a similar fashion to earlier types (Mason 2011; Jones, A. 2016). Importantly these vessels do not necessarily represent a new type but instead show a preference for incised motifs in the later 3rd millennium BC.

[5] *At present the site is undergoing re-dating as part of the Times of Their Lives (T.O.T.L) project. See http://totl.eu/ for details*

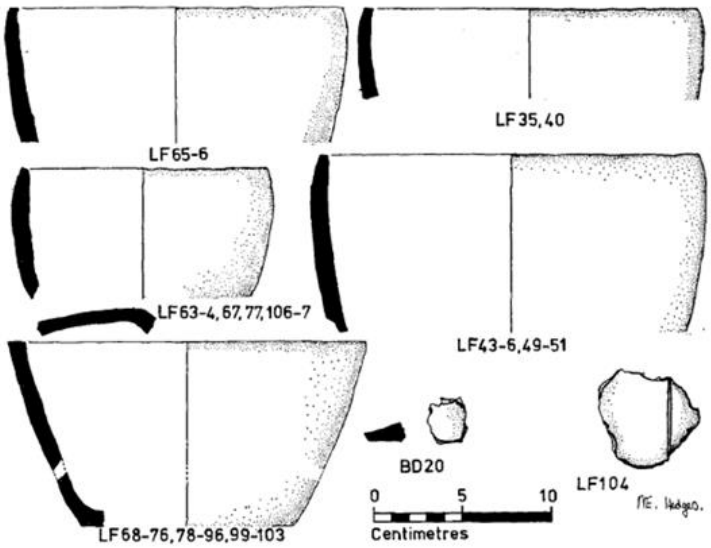

Figure 7.17: *2nd millennium BC plain wares from Liddle, South Ronaldsay and Beaquoy, Mainland (Hedges 1977: Fig 9)*

The use of incised decoration as the main component of decorative schemes recalls the earlier usage of incised motifs as seen at Pool (Fig 5.15). Given the chronological gap between the two a direct link cannot be established, but incised decoration was not entirely usurped by applied decoration, as seen at Crossiecrown (ORK6). Instead chevrons appear to have remained part of the wider artistic repertoire occurring on rock art throughout the 3rd millennium BC (*cf.* Thomas, A. 2016) (Fig. 5.16). Current interpretations suggest a connection between these and Beaker vessels to the south, citing the zoned nature of decoration and the use of chevron motifs. Whilst a link to Beakers is possible, the emergence of incised schemes at Tofts Ness (ORK19) could reflect on contacts with Shetland. This contact could be connected to the exchange of steatite. Decorative parallels to Shetland extend beyond Tofts Ness (ORK19), with further examples recorded at Crossiecrown (ORK6) and the Links of Noltland (ORK10). The widespread use of these motifs could reflect an increased sharing of ceramic designs between the two regions. Whether these motifs themselves draw on Beakers remains an open question given current uncertainties regarding dating and sequence.

Well-defined Beakers are limited to a handful of examples, including the sherd from Rinyo (ORK16). At Crossiecrown (ORK6), Links of Noltland (ORK10) and Rinyo (ORK16) Beakers are employed, forming a small percentage of the overall assemblage. Except for the Rinyo (ORK16) Beaker, the remaining examples are atypical. It appears that within Orkney, as in Shetland, a variety of site-specific vessels were in use. The form of the vessels suggests a degree of continuity in function with the preceding period, with large vessels used in storage and food preparation (*cf.* Jones, A. 1999) (**Section 5.2.4**).

Figure 7.18: *The distinctive Odin Stone (on the right), Mainland with its perforation. The pit in which the s-profile Beaker was found was near to this spot (© R.C.A.H.M.S).*

Beakers appear to be absent from Tofts Ness (ORK19), but as noted the highly fragmentary nature of the material makes reconstructing forms difficult. As Jones notes, the Beakers from Crossiecrown (ORK6) are 'slotted' into the existing assemblage, taking on roles of smaller fine bucket/ tub vessels (2007: 132). The presence of these new forms thus does not occasion radical shifts in practice. Instead, as highlighted in the case of Shetland, ceramics are not highly coded, various elements are actively blended in the creation of forms. These elements reflect and draw on wider networks but employed in regionally specific ways. Within this, there is a degree of stability in form, with bucket/ tub vessels persisting, as evidenced in the later assemblage from Liddle and Beaquoy (Hedges 1977), and recently excavated examples at Lopness (Figs. 7.17 & 7.34). The continuity of bucket/ tub vessels can in part be explained by their continued utilitarian role compared to the potentially more specialised roles undertaken by Grooved Ware. This includes its role in large-scale consumptive events and monumentality, both of which were on the decline during the later 3rd millennium (**Section 5.2.5**). The significance of this wider assemblage and the role of pottery within it will be returned to in the final section of this chapter.

7.3. Standing Stones

7.3.1 Nature of the evidence

Alongside the better-known stone circles at Stenness and Brodgar (Figs. 5.11 & 5.12) is the additional stone setting at the Stones of Odin (ORK1). The site is located to the north of the

Stones of Stenness and roughly southwest from Barnhouse**.** The Stones of Odin (ORK1) are one of a series of monuments, including the Stenness circle, that emerge following the end of the Barnhouse settlement (Challands *et al.* 2005: 206). Upon excavation, the site comprised three stone sockets, including Pit [861]. In contrast to the other two probable stone sockets, Pit [861] contained packing stones reddened by fire. The rock-cut pit was similarly reddened. The excavators suggested that at some point in the 3rd millennium BC the standing stone was removed (*ibid.:* 215). The remaining stones, including the unusually shaped Odin Stone, with its perforation (Fig. 7.18), survived into the 19th century (Thomas, F. 1852: 101). It is unclear if the burning is associated with this or whether it postdates the removal of the stone (Challands *et al.* 2005: 215)

7.3.2 Morphology

A single s-profile Beaker was recovered from the fill of Pit [861] (Fig 7.19). The outer surfaces are undecorated, but the internal bevel of the rim is decorated with cord impressions. The rim diameter measures *c.*280mm, with a reconstructed height > 300mm, recalling the dimensions of the large vessel from the Links of Noltland (ORK10). The vessel came from the lower fill of the pit and was intermixed with charcoal and fragments of burnt sandstone, like the upper layer (Challands *et al.* 2005: 215). Given the unabraded condition of the sherds, it is possible that the vessel was deliberately deposited into the pit. The vessel has previously been interpreted as part of a structured deposit, placed following the removal of the stone (Challands

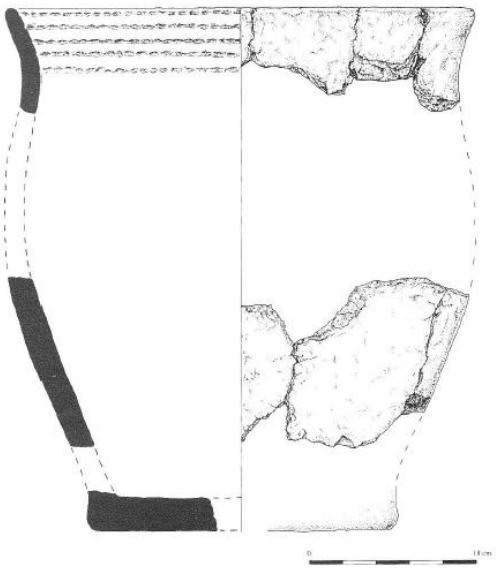

Figure 7.19: *Probable s-profile Beaker from Barnhouse Odin (ORK1), Mainland (Richards, C. 2005: 8.16)*

et al. 2005:215). One alternative is that the activity represents the remains of a burial (Downes pers comm.). The form and nature of the activity find close parallel with the burials from Redland (ORK15) and Corrigal (ORK5)[6] (**Section 7.4.3**).

7.4 Funerary Finds

7.4.1 Nature of the evidence

Whereas in other regions it was common practice in the later 3rd millennium BC to inhume bodies with ceramic or other material goods, this practice is relatively rare in Orkney (Card 2005: 56; Mason 2011: 37). Among the non-ceramic grave goods are the gold discs and amber beads from the Knowes of Trotty[7], dated to 2130-1890 cal BC and 2030-1770 cal BC (Sheridan & Higham 2006: 205) (Fig 7.20)[8]. These distinctive finds demonstrate continued links between Orkney and other parts of Britain in the late 3rd / early 2nd millennium. These

Site	Code	Parent Context/ Sub-context	Reference
Newhouse Birsay	ORK12	Unobtrusive cist	Marwick 1951
Taversoe Tuick	ORK18	Chambered cairn/ Cist	Reynolds 1987
Blomuir 2	ORK2	Pit	Downes 2005: 295
Redland	ORK15	Barrow (?)/ Cist	Downes 2005: 295
Upper Bigging Corrigall	ORK5	Rock cut pit/ Cist	Downes 2005: 296
Sand Fiold	ORK17	Rock cut pit/ Cist	Dalland *et al.*1999
Quandale	ORK14	Cemetery/ Mound/ Cist	Grant 1937
Werne	ORK20	Cemetery / Cist	Hedges 1981
Kewing	ORK8	Unobtrusive cist/ Cist fill	Ballin Smith 2014

Table 7.7: *Principal funerary sites discussed in text*

[6] *In this light an alternative to reconstructing the vessel as an s-profile Beaker is to see it as a high-shouldered vessel similar to those from Redland (ORK15) and Corrigal (ORK5)*
[7] *For a review of the objects from the Knowes of Trotty cf. Sheridan et al. 2003*
[8] *Further dates include several for cremated bone from the site (Ashmore 2005b: 177; Sheridan 2007c: 220)*

Figure 7.20: *Metalwork and amber from Knowes of Trotty, Mainland (P.S.A.S. 1862: Plate XXII)*

finds, however, form a notable exception, and burials overall tend to lack diagnostic grave goods (Hedges 1981: 44). Crouched inhumations without grave goods are widely recorded from across Orkney, and are far more common than examples of accompanied burials (Downes 2005: 137; Hedges 1981: 44). The limited dating evidence suggests that these burials span the 3rd millennium (Simpson, D. *et al.* 2007: 65) (*cf.* **Section 5.2.2**). Cremation is increasingly common from the late 3rd into 2nd millennium BC, with bucket/ tub vessels[9] frequently deployed as covers or containers for cremated remains. In total, ten funerary sites were recorded as part of this project[10] (Fig. 7.21) (Table 7.7). The catalogued vessels were recovered from a variety of cist or pit features (Fig. 7.22). The bulk of the sites were located on the Mainland, with three vessels from Rousay, two of these from the cemetery at Quandale (ORK14). Cemetery sites are common, examples were recorded from Rousay and the Mainland. Pairs of cists, or multiple cists set into chambered cairns were also common (*cf.* Downes 2005; Simpson, D. *et al.* 2007; Hedges 1981). The cist at Blomuir 2 (ORK2) is one of a pair (Downes 2005: 295), and at Taversoe Tuick (ORK18) multiple cists and burials appear to have been set into the mound and the passageway (Reynolds 1985: Illus 3, 5). Vessels were predominantly bucket/ tub, forming 50% of the total group. Food Vessels

[9] *These have in the past been referred to as bucket urns and/ or Northern Isles Urns (cf. Sheridan 2007a: 171-3*)

[10] *The ceramic finds from burial at Ramberry Head are not included in the following review as these were published following completion of the data collection. The finds are described in Jones, A. et al. 2016.*

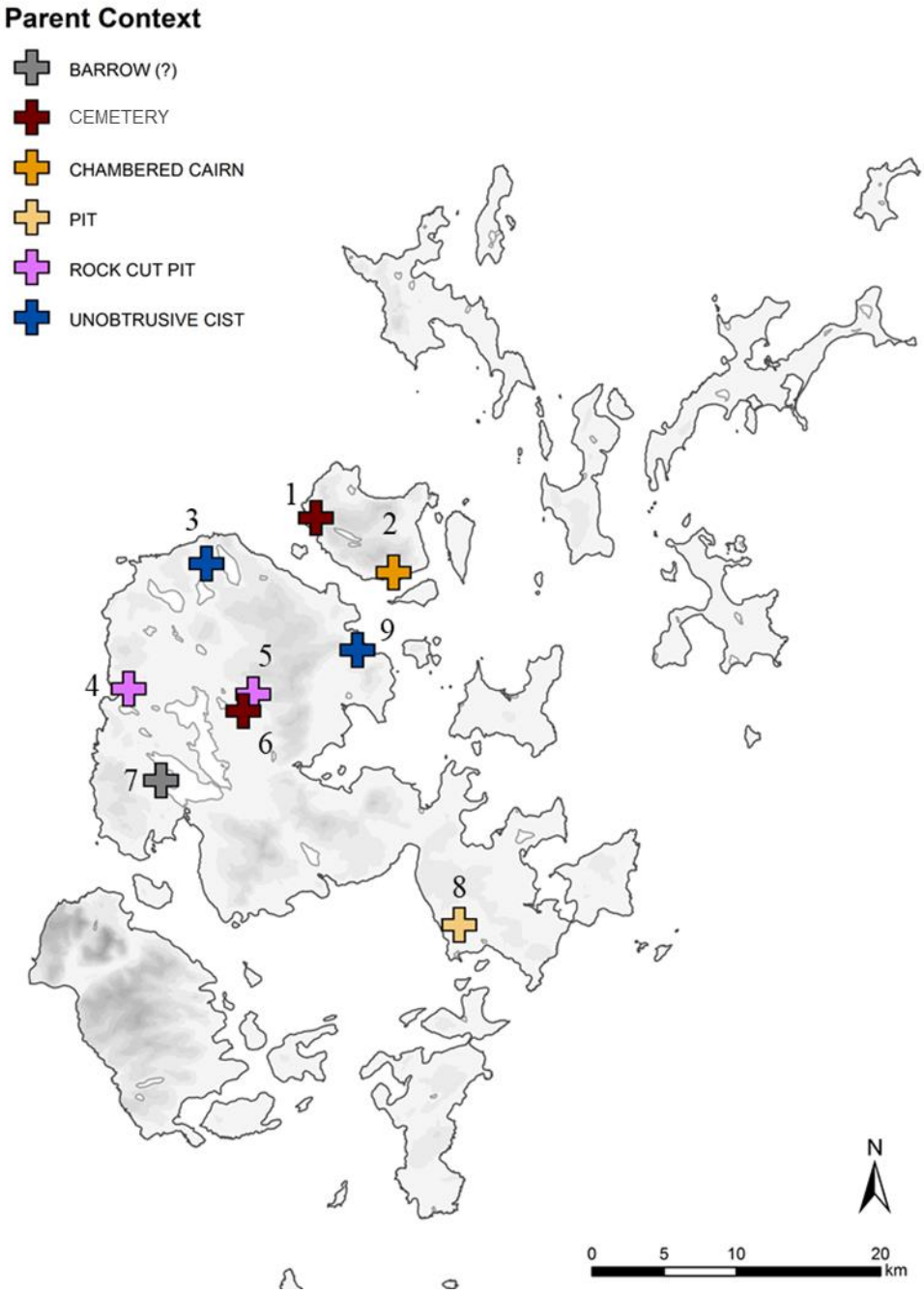

Figure 7.21: *Distribution of principal funerary sites in Orkney discussed in the text:*

Key: ***1.*** *Quandale (ORK14), Rousay,* ***2.*** *Taversoe Tuick (ORK18), Rousay,* ***3.*** *Newhouse, Birsay (ORK12), Mainland,* ***4.*** *Sand Fiold (ORK17), Mainland,* ***5.*** *Corrigall, Upper Bigging (ORK5), Mainland,* ***6.*** *Werne Cist 1 (ORK20), Mainland,* ***7.*** *Redland (ORK15), Mainland,* ***8.*** *Blomuir (ORK2), Mainland,* ***9.*** *Kewing (ORK8), Mainland*

formed a further significant percentage of the overall vessel count (Fig. 7.23).

7.4.2 Indeterminate Vessels

Two indeterminate vessels were recovered from Cist 1 at Werne (ORK20) and the cist at Kewing (ORK8). The vessel from Werne (ORK20) comprised a handful of indeterminate sherds, prohibiting definition of the vessel form (Hedges 1981: 48). Whilst the vessel from Kewing (ORK8) is described as a Beaker (Ballin Smith 2014: 108), it has instead been assigned to this category given its highly fragmentary condition.

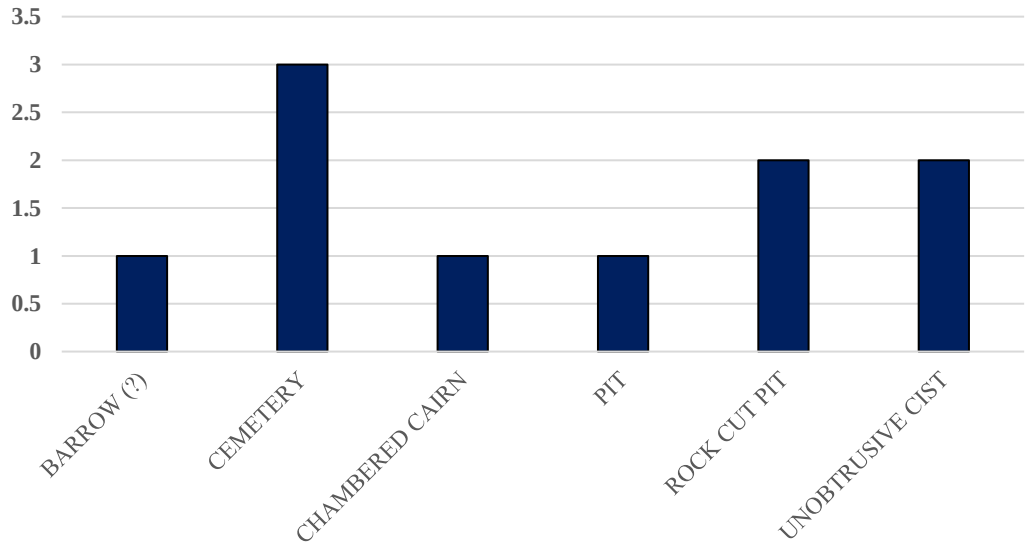

Figure 7.22: *Funerary Contexts in which ceramic vessels were recovered in Orkney (see **App. H1** for defintion of parent contexts)*

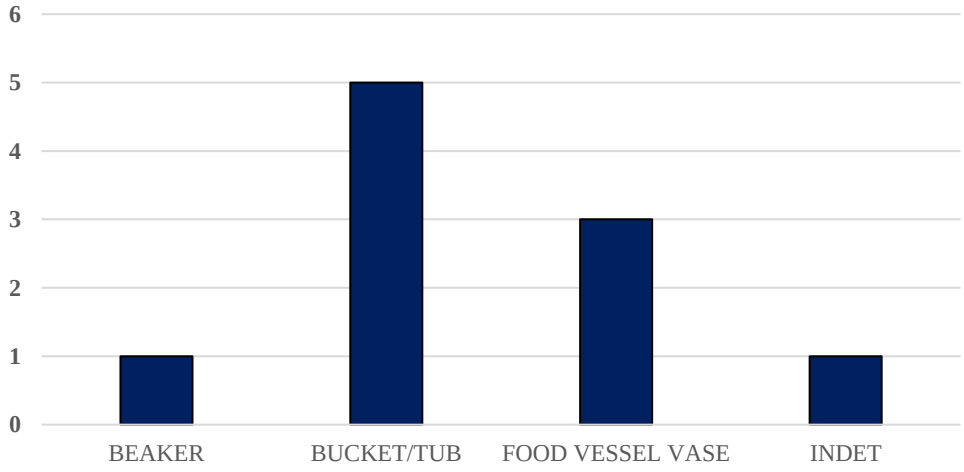

Figure 7.23: *Breakdown of principal pottery forms recorded from funerary contexts in Orkney*

Funerary Contexts

Cist 1 at Werne (ORK20) formed part of a larger flat cemetery, with further cists uncovered nearby (Hedges 1981: 52) (Fig. 7.24). The cist was constructed from flags with an additional flag forming the floor. The cist measured 1.18 x 0.75m and was orientated ENE/WSW (Fig. 7.25). The fill had been disturbed and the original position of the grave goods and cremated remains is unknown (*ibid.*). The cist at Kewing (ORK8) was situated in a low knoll on a narrow coastal strip overlooking Eynhallow Sound, on the north-eastern edge of the Orkney mainland. The cist itself was set into an irregular pit, dug into the clay and gravel subsoil. The base of the cist was laid with a single flagstone, with rough blocks of stone placed to infill the space between the slabs and pit cut (Ballin Smith 2014: 91-5).

Morphology & Associations

The vessel from Werne (ORK20) comprised only two rim sherds, and little detail is available regarding the nature of the vessel (Hedges 1981: 52-3). Fragments of textile were also recorded from the cist. The fragment of textile is one of several examples of organic artefacts being recovered from such cists, including the grass mat from Sand Fiold (ORK17). Alongside the artefacts were the cremated remains of a single individual aged 30-40 (Luke 1981: 69). The cremated remains at Kewing (ORK8) represented the remains of a single male aged 35-45 (Roberts, P. 2014: 97). A similar range of artefacts was recorded at Kewing (ORK8) with fragments of a mat and cremated remains recorded alongside the pottery. The vessel had a sandy fabric, with a red exterior and pale yellow/brown interior (Ballin Smith 2014: 108). One sherd is decorated with three faint incised oblique lines (*ibid.*). A further possible rim sherd decorated with two fine oblique marks was recovered (*ibid.*). In the report the sherds are paralleled to Beaker vessels from the north of Britain (*ibid.*). The attribution of the vessel as a Beaker is tentative and the possibility of the vessels being of a form akin to those from Corrigall (ORK5) and Redland (ORK15) cannot be ruled out.

Chronology

The cremated bones from the cist at Werne (ORK20) are dated to 2400-1970 cal BC (GrA-21627) (**App. F2**), whilst those at Kewing (ORK8) fall slightly later, 1960-1730 cal BC (SUERC-817) (**App. F2**) (Fig. 7.33).

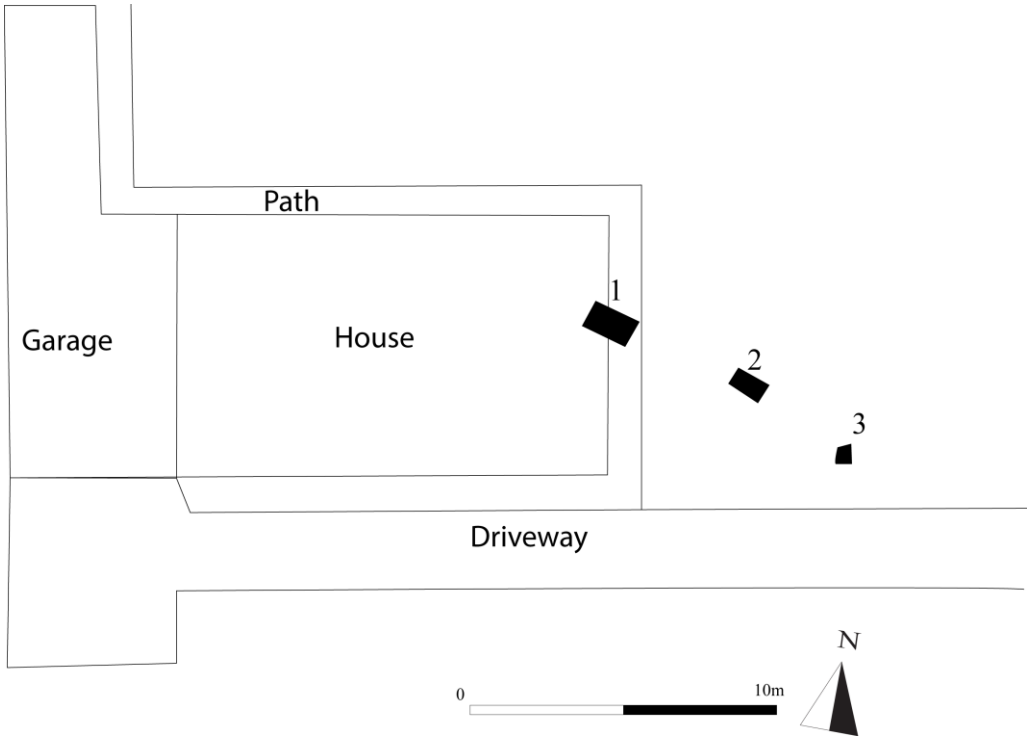

Figure 7.24: *Distribution of cists at Werne (ORK20), Mainland (after Hedges 1981: Fig 3)*

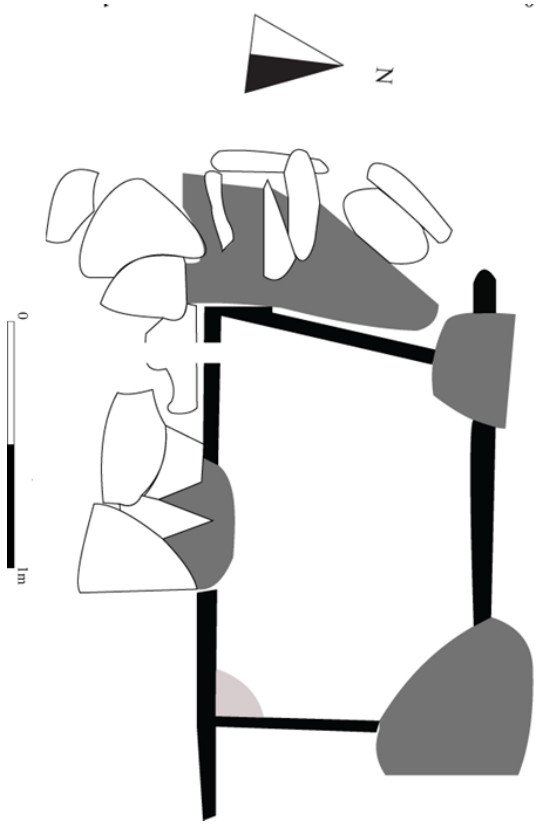

Figure 7.25: *Plan of Cist 1 Werne (ORK20), Mainland (after Hedges 1981: Fig 3)*

Summary

The sherds and textile fragment from Werne (ORK20) are suggested to have formed part of the burial rite, rather than the grave assemblage (Hedges 1981: 48). At Kewing (ORK8) It is suggested that the vessel was placed on the pyre, and accidently became incorporated into the cist fill (Ballin Smith 2014: 109). A similar situation is recorded at the Queenafjold barrow, where a burnt pot sherd was recovered from the cist (Downes 2005: 40). This recalls the use of accessory vessels which could have been placed into cremation pyres (Gibson, A. 2004b: 284) (**Section 2.4**). Placed over the cremated remains at Kewing (ORK8) were fragments of a probable grass mat made from cereal straw (Ballin Smith 2014: 101). Grass mats have been recorded from several other cists including Antabreck, Werne (ORK20) (Hedges 1981) and Sand Fiold (ORK17). The "*mossy-looking substance*" from a cist "*between Vog and Sying*" excavated by Petrie and Thomas could represent the remains of a further mat (Thomas, F. 1852: 93). The association of the burial with a mat situates it within a broader continuum of burials where grass mats or other organic materials[11] were frequently included (Dalland 1991: 409-10).

7.4.3 Food Vessels

Three high-shouldered Food Vessels were recorded. Two small high-shouldered vessels were recorded from Corrigall (ORK5) and Redland (ORK15). A single tall high-shouldered vessel was recovered from the cist at Sand Fiold (ORK17). Vessels were recovered from unobtrusive cists, but the Redland (ORK15) cist could originally have been sealed by a mound (Downes 2005: 295). At Corrigall (ORK5) the cist was defined by a slight kerb, in part formed by a natural outcrop (*ibid.*).

Funerary Contexts

Food Vessels were primarily found in cists situated on hillsides, often near or overlooking bodies of water. Similar locations had previously been favoured for the construction of chambered cairns (Crozier *et al.* 2016: 222; Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1989: 18). Cists were formed of four slabs, often with a further basal slab. At Sand Fiold (ORK17) the cist was

[11] *While mats are common in Orkney, other burials from across Scotland indicate the use of organic wrappings. The use of hides as wrapping have been recorded at several other cists across Scotland including the recent example at Langwell Farm (Lelong 2014)*

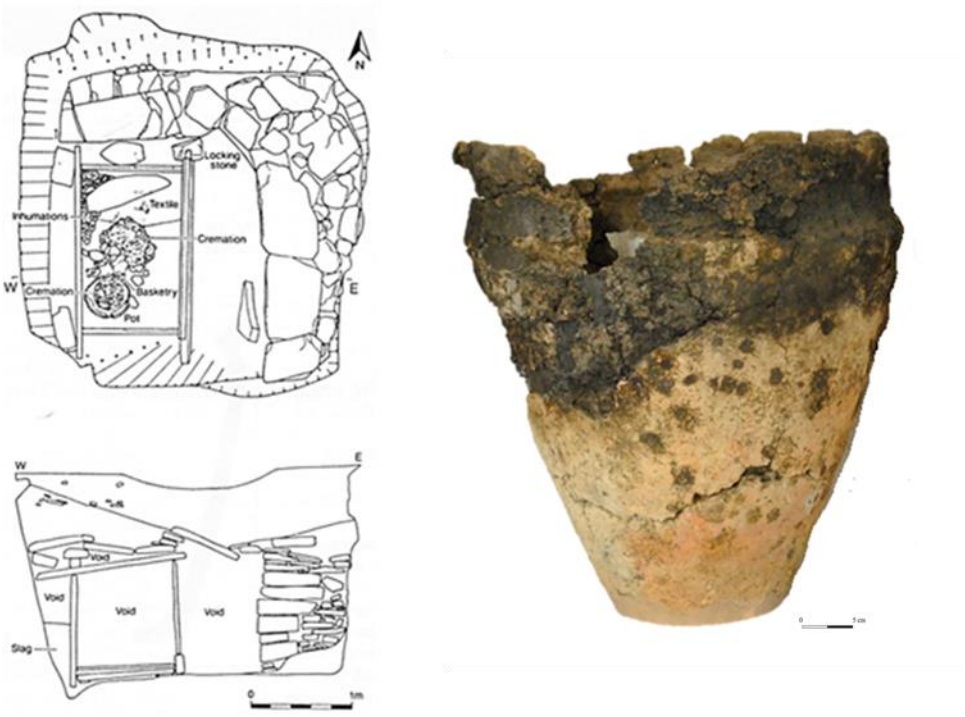

Figure 7.26: *Layout of the cist at Sand Fiold (ORK17), Mainland and associated high-shouldered Food Vessel (Dalland 1999: Fig 6) (Photo © Tankerness House)*

placed into a large rock cut pit measuring 2.0 x 3.2 x 3.4m (Dalland 1999: 377). The cist was unusual in being designed to be re-opened and accessed by a roofed passage (Dalland 1999: 375) (Fig. 7.26). As discussed in **Chapter 5**, the cist was re-accessed on multiple occasions and its construction could date to *c.*2900-2500 cal BC (Dalland 1999:173) (*cf.* **App. F2**). Owing to these episodes of reuse it was suggested by the excavator that the cist may have been marked out by a superstructure (Dalland 1999: 407).

Morphology & Associations

The vessel from Corrigall (ORK5) is *c.* 94mm tall with an external rim diameter of 120mm. The vessel sports a slight shoulder and is decorated with twisted, cord-impressed motifs consisting of opposing triangles infilled with diagonal lines (Fig. 7.27). The internal bevel of the rim was similarly decorated. The form is partite but lacks a sharp distinction in the shoulder. Due to its zoned layout the decoration of the vessels has been paralleled with that found on Beakers (MacSween unpub. c). The decoration comprises a series of twisted cord-impressed motifs comprising opposing infilled triangles (Fig. 7.26), with cord impressions

Figure 7.27: *Small high-shouldered Food Vessel from Corrigall (ORK5), Mainland (© Tankerness House)*

Figure 7.28: *Small high-shouldered Food Vessel from Redland (ORK15), Mainland (©Tankerness House)*

on the bevel of the rim. The vessel is squat with an external rim diameter of 120mm compared to a height of 94mm. The morphologically similar vessel from the cist at Redland (ORK15) is taller, with a height of 130mm and a rim diameter of 135mm. In contrast to the squat example from Corrigall (ORK5), the exterior is decorated with a series of oblique incisions below the shoulder, forming a hurdle pattern (Fig. 7.28). Hurdle patterns were noted on other vessels from the study area including the unprovenanced example from Loth, Sutherland (Fig. 8.32). The inside of the neck is decorated with a series of incised zig zags, which occur on the shoulder as well.

The vessel from Sand Fiold (ORK17), a tall high-shouldered Food Vessel, contained the cremated remains of an adult male. The vessel sports a well-defined high shoulder whilst the rim has a steep internal bevel. The vessel measures 470mm tall with a rim diameter of 380mm. The exterior of the vessel is decorated with a series of oval impressions in the cavetto between the rim and shoulder, and along the curved internal bevel (Fig.7.26). The interior of the vessel was lined with organic material representing the remains of a basket or some form of lining (Carter *et al.* 1999: 387) (Fig. 7.29).

At Corrigall (ORK5) and Redland (ORK15) no human remains were recovered, but a circular dark stain on the floor of the latter could represent the remains of a cremation (Downes 2005: 296). Nearby the Corrigall (ORK5) cist were the remains of a cremation that could have originally derived from the cist (Downes 2005: 297). The cremated remains from within the vessel at Sand Fiold (ORK17) belonged to an adult male aged 30-40. Included among the other remains were a foetus and a young adult (Table 7.8). Apart from the organic material lining

Burial	**Context**	**Sex**	**Age**	**Notes**	**C14 Sample ID**
Inhumation	Disturbed, covered by grass mat,	Indet.	Young adult		UT-1484
Inhumation	mixed with other inhumation	Indet.	Foetus c, 32 weeks		UT-1485
Cremation	Urned	Male	30-40		UT-1487 (on fibres within urn)
Cremation	Covered by grass mat, centre of cist	Male	25-40	Associated with two antler tines	

Table 7.8: *Remains from Sand Fiold (ORK17), Mainland (Dalland 1999: 400-2) (cf.* ***App. F2*** *for details of dating)*

Figure 7.29: *Fibrous material inside vessel from Sand Fiold (ORK17), Mainland (Dalland 1999: Fig 15)*

the Sand Fiold (ORK17) vessel, no other artefacts were recorded in association with the high-shouldered vessels. The residue from the Redland (ORK15) vessel was analysed suggesting the presence of a honey-based drink (Moffat 1987) Within the tall high-shouldered vessel from Sand Fiold (ORK17) traces of meadowsweet were noted along with other forms of pollen, indicating possible floral deposits (Dalland 1999: 397-8).

Chronology

The Sand Fiold (ORK17) vessel belongs to the second phase of the cist. Dating of the fibres lining the pot are dated to 2140-1830 cal BC (UT-1487) (Fig.7.33) (**App. F2**). Based on present dating that there is a gap of around 600 years between the deposition of the foetal remains and the later cremations at Sand Fiold (ORK17) (see Fig. 5.7), but it is possible that some remains were removed (Dalland 1999: 407). The vessels from Corrigall (ORK5) and Redland (ORK15) are undated.

Summary

All three vessels were associated with cists and cremation burials, but this is not certain in the case of Redland (ORK15) and Corrigall (ORK5). The latter vessels appear to have been placed as an accompaniment, the Redland (ORK15) vessel containing a possible fermented beverage.

In contrast to the vessel from Kewing (ORK8) these do not appear to have been involved in the cremation rite. Instead, the Sand Fiold (ORK17) vessel is employed as a container for remains deposited in a cist that was likely 600 years old by the time of deposition. Whilst the vessels differ in terms of use, there is a broad similarity in form, with a marked divergence in height. The height of the Sand Fiold (ORK17) vessel can be argued to have been informed by its role as a container for a cremation burial, whilst the remaining vessels were employed as containers for offerings for the dead. Whilst the Sand Fiold (ORK17) vessel is the only example of this type, it is possible that one of the vessels from Blows is of a similar form (see **App. C3**). The vessel is tall with a slight concavity between the mouth and shoulder (Callander 1933: 346). The precise chronology and overlap of these is unclear but based on typological similarities it would seem likely that the vessels are broadly contemporary. As highlighted in **Section 7.3** the vessel from Barnhouse Odin (ORK1) could – based on contextual associations – be viewed as an additional member of this group. Whilst reconstructed as a Beaker there is scope to interpret the vessel as a high-shouldered Food Vessel.

7.4.4 Bucket/ tub

Five examples of bucket/ tub vessels, including a single example of a steatite vessel, were recorded. These are primarily recovered from barrow cemeteries, in contrast to other vessel types found principally in unobtrusive cists (Downes 2005: 38). A wide number of other ceramic finds have been noted, but these tend to comprise coarse sherds of pottery, which without dating are hard to place within the broader sequence. A number of these are listed in **Appendix C3**, but this list is not exhaustive. The bulk of the finds discussed here stem from Rousay – from the cemetery at Quandale (ORK14) (Fig. 7.30) and the chambered cairn at Taversoe Tuick (ORK18). The bucket/ tub vessel from Newhouse (ORK12) is also included here.

Funerary Contexts

33% of the vessels (*n. 2*) were recovered from cemetery sites, found in a variety of funerary contexts ranging from stone-built cists to pits. The cemetery at Quandale (ORK14) comprised several mounds, divided into several groups (Fig. 7.30). From the Whoom and Knap Knowes, composed of eight mounds in total, two ceramic vessels and a single steatite vessel were recorded (Table 7.9) (Grant 1937). The Knap Knowes vessels were recovered from a pit set into Mound 3, with a flagstone base, and a disturbed cist in Mound 5 (*ibid.*). Set into the chambered cairn at Taversoe Tuick (ORK18) were three cists. It is probable that EO753, which

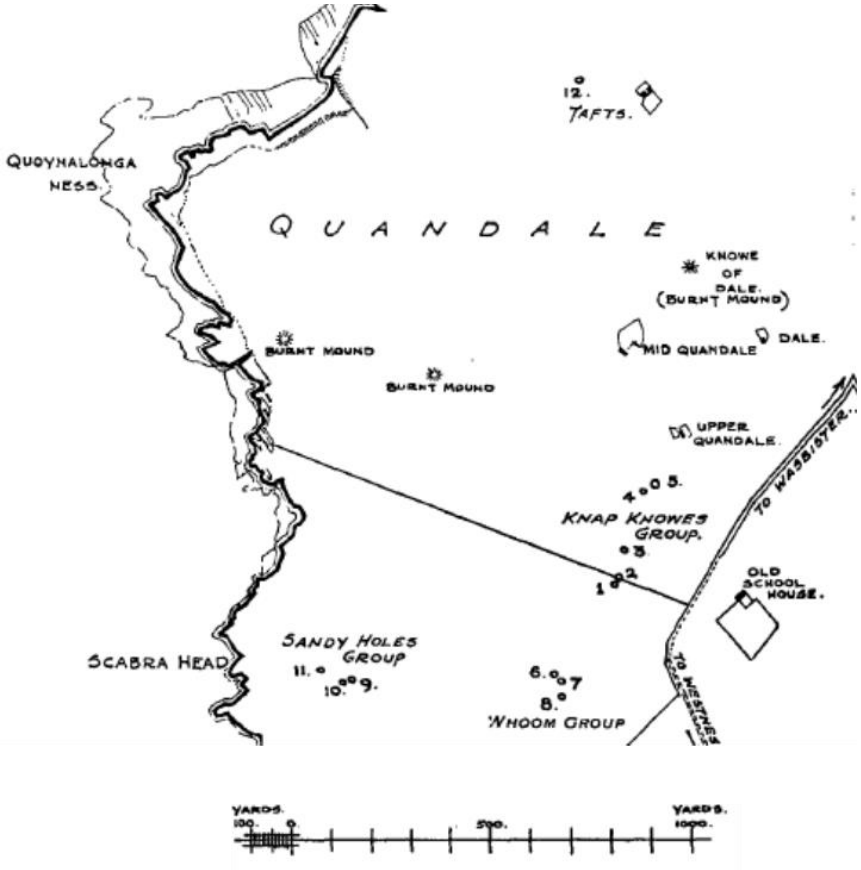

Figure 7.30: *Plan of mounds and burials at Quandale (ORK14), Rousay (Grant 1937)*

Mound	Group	Burial Setting	Burial Type	Vessel	Form	Other finds
8	Whoom	Square cist	Cremation	Steatite	Bucket/ tub	Additional steatite fragments and 'stoppers'
3	Knap Knowes	Stone packing	Cremation	Clay	Bucket/ tub	
5	Knap Knowes	?Square? Cist	Cremation	Clay	Bucket/ tub	Flint scraper

Table 7.9: *Summary of mounds with ceramics at Quandale (ORK14), Rousay*

was recovered from outside the entrance of the upper chamber, originally belonged to one of these cists (Grant 1939: 163). These were set into the upper level of the mound "*on a layer of earth about a foot thick*" (Turner, W. 1903:74). In addition to this, pots with cremations underneath were recorded from the passage (Reynolds 1985: 122). However, the precise context and nature of deposition is not wholly clear (Davidson, J.L. and Henshall 1989:

Figure 7.31: *Steatite vessel and steatite plugs from Mound 8 Quandale (ORK14), Rousay (© NMS)*

Figure 7.32: *Bucket/ tub vessel from Newhouse (ORK12), Mainland (Author © NMS)*

163). The single cist from Newhouse (ORK12) measured 1.11 x 0.63m, with an internal area of 0.69m^2 (Marwick 1951: 240). Whilst no remains were present, the size of the cist could have accommodated an inhumation. The base of the cist was laid with multiple slabs, creating a rough surface (*ibid.*).

Morphology & Associations

Vessels tended to have heights of 270mm, except for the smaller vessel from Newhouse (ORK12), which measured 139mm. The vessel was initially described in Marwick's note as a "*late Beaker*" (1951: 240), Clarke in his analysis of Beakers labelled the pot as a Food Vessel (1970: no. 739). The form would suggest more of an affinity with bucket/ tub vessels as documented among domestic assemblages. The squat form of the vessel contrasts with the larger vessels associated with cremation burials, suggesting that– like the small high-shouldered Food Vessels from Corrigall (ORK5) and Redland (ORK15) – the vessel was intended as an accompaniment rather than a container. The exterior of the vessel was decorated with nine to ten lightly incised chevrons (Fig 7.32). This mode of decoration is comparable to the incised sherds observed at Tofts Ness (ORK19) and Crossiecrown (ORK6), but in the absence of dating evidence its relationship to these cannot be determined. Overall, the larger bucket/ tub vessels were undiagnostic, but the vessel from Mound 3, Quandale (ORK14), sported angled walls, the surfaces of which were undecorated (Grant 1937: 76). In the same group in Mound 5 a badly ruined cist was found with cremated remains, a flint scraper and ceramic fragments (*ibid.*)

The Blomuir 2 (ORK2) vessel is of a similar form, with a rim diameter of around 270mm (Downes 2005: 295). The vessel from Taversoe Tuick (ORK18), now lost, was initially reconstructed by Henshall in the 1960s as an 'undecorated Beaker', but by the late 1980s had become a flat-bottomed bucket/ tub vessel (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1989: 162). Grant suggested that this vessel could have come from the cists as well (1939: 163). In addition, sherds of a steatite vessel were recovered, and Turner following Burroughs suggested that each cist could originally have contained a pot (1903: 79).

66% of the recovered vessels were associated with cremations. At Newhouse (ORK12) the nature of the burial is unknown as no remains were recorded in association with the vessel. In only four cases, human remains were recorded in association with the vessels. The vessels from Taversoe Tuick (ORK18) could have originally been associated with cremated remains (Turner, W. 1903: 79). The remains from Mound 3, Quandale (ORK14) were undiagnostic (Grant 1937: 83). The cremated remains from Blomuir 2 (ORK2) were of a probable young

adult male (Downes 2005). Information on the placement of vessels was restricted. The vessels from Quandale (ORK14) Mound 3 and Blomuir 2 (ORK2) were employed as containers for the ashes of the deceased alongside fragments of cramp (*ibid.*). Mound 3 in the Knap Knowes group featured a pot set upright on a flag, with small flat stones built around it (Grant 1937: 76). Additional finds were only recorded in association with the steatite vessel from Quandale (ORK14).

Chronology

All the sites, bar Newhouse (ORK12), have radiocarbon dates. The vessel from Mound 3, Quandale (ORK14) is dated to 2140-1770 cal BC (GrA-19988) (**App. F2**) and the Taversoe Tuick (ORK18) cremation to 2140-1750 cal BC (GrA-21734*)* (**App. F2**). The Blomuir (ORK2) sherd falls slightly later, 2040-1690 cal BC (GrA-21738) (**App. F2**) (Fig. 7.33).

Summary

Based on the limited evidence it is possible to define two groups of bucket/ tub vessels:

- small squat vessels used as accompaniment
- taller vessels categorised through their use as containers for cremated remains

Both categories are involved in cremation practices but show differences in their contexts of deposition, ranging from cists to pits. The restricted chronological information suggests that these variations could reflect on intra-regional choice, rather than temporal factors. As will be discussed, burial practices - as in the early 3rd millennium BC - appear to encompass a diverse array of rites, in which bucket/ tub vessels played a range of roles. The form of these closely overlaps with bucket/ tub vessels from domestic contexts, suggesting an increased overlap between the funerary and domestic sphere. This overlap in part stems from the affordances of the vessel, which – due to their size – could act as containers for human remains. Changes in the treatment of the body can be related to wider changes in funerary practices, with cremation becoming the dominant rite.

7.4.5 Steatite Vessels

Funerary Contexts

Although steatite vessels are commonly found in Orkney, most of these lie outside the time

frame under study (Fig. 2.18). The only dated example that falls within the period is that from Mound 8 in the Whoom group at Quandale (ORK14).

Morphology & Associations

The steatite vessel from Mound 8 (Whoom), Quandale (ORK14) is typical of the type of steatite vessels found within the region. The vessel measures around 16-18cm tall, with a diameter of 18cm, and is roughly bowl shaped, though somewhat lopsided (Grant 1937: 78) (Fig. 7.31). The mouth of the vessel had been covered with a rough piece of flagstone, a feature that can be seen at other steatite burials, including Loth Road (Fig. 2.19). The cist at Loth Road is comparable in form to those from Quandale (ORK14), comprising four flagstones, with the pot set into the centre of the cist. The steatite vessels from Loth Road are not directly dated but the cemetery spans a period from 1630-1310 BC (Fig. 2.18).

Along with the pot from Mound 8 were three pieces of steatite, originally interpreted as amulets (Grant 1937: 78) but are likely to be stoppers for organic containers (Sheridan 2003a: 222). Similar examples have been recorded from Beenie Hoose, Bayanne and Kebister in Shetland (Sharman 2009: 39). The cremated remains found within the vessel likely belong to a young adult of unknown sex (Grant 1937: 83).

Chronology

Cremated bone from the vessel is dated to 2200-1900 cal BC, overlapping closely with the dates from Mound 3, dated to 2140-1770 cal BC (**App. F2**). These dates closely overlap with Sand Fiold (ORK17) and Taversoe Tuick (ORK18) suggesting that steatite vessels were used contemporaneously with a range of ceramic vessels. This suggests a potential range of choices involved in the selection of vessel.

Summary

The Quandale (ORK14) vessel lies early in the overall sequence of steatite vessels from the Orkney Isles. Later examples cluster between 2200 and 1500 cal BC (Fig. 2.19). These include the large vessel from Linga Fiold and Loth Road (Fig. 2.19). During the 2nd millennium steatite vessels play conspicuous roles in funerary rites. In some cases, as at Linga Fiold, it is possible that the vessel was placed directly on the cremation pyre, leading to the discoloration of the

exterior (Sharman 2004). Similar sooting is noted on other examples of steatite vessels (Sharman 2007:23). In other cases, the vessel appears to have been merely employed as a container for the remains. This suggest a potential range of roles being undertaken by steatite vessels, overlapping with the use of ceramic vessels in cremation practices (Table 7.11). In contrast to bucket/ tub forms, steatite vessels are primarily defined by their use in the funerary sphere (Smith, A. 2007: 286).

7.4.6 Summary of forms and chronology

50% of the recorded vessels are bucket/ tub forms, and a further 30% were high-shouldered Food Vessels. No examples of Beakers were recorded. Food Vessels were confined to the Mainland, suggesting a possible regional aspect to the distribution and selection of types.

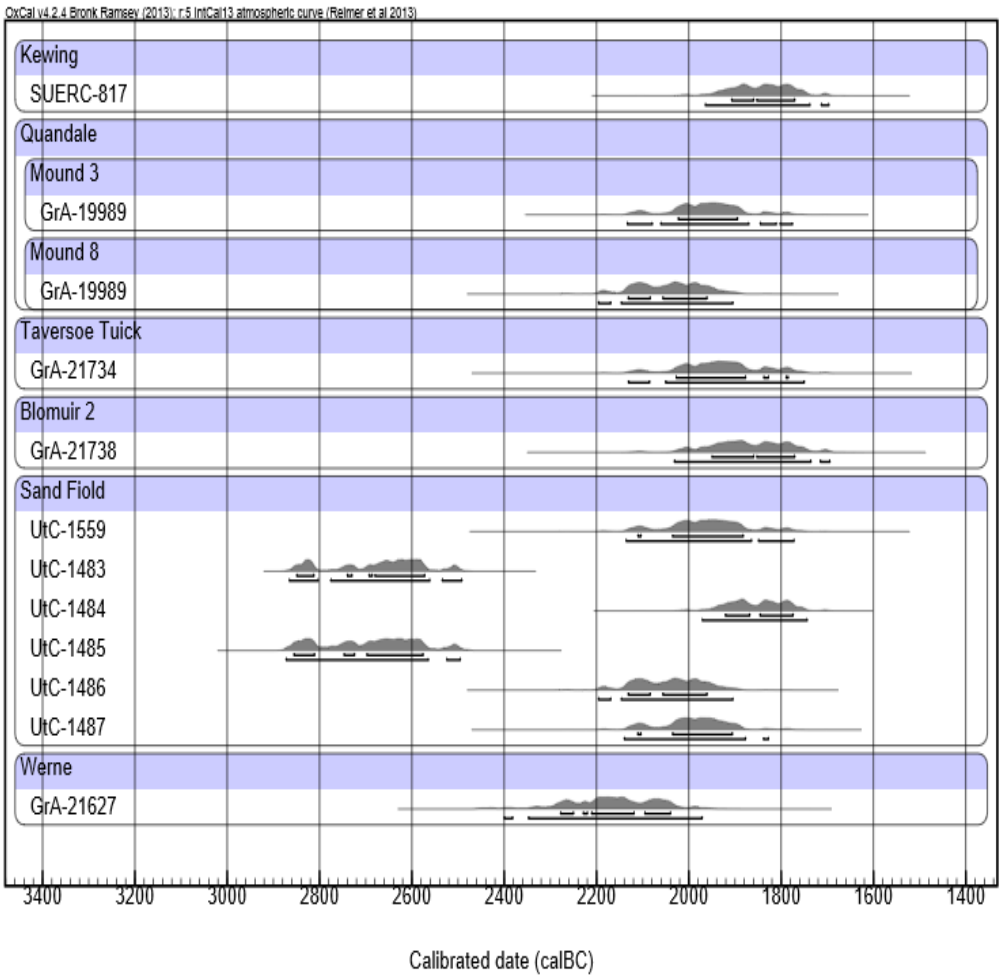

Figure 7.33: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for funerary deposits in Orkney with ceramic associations (see **App. F2** for details)*

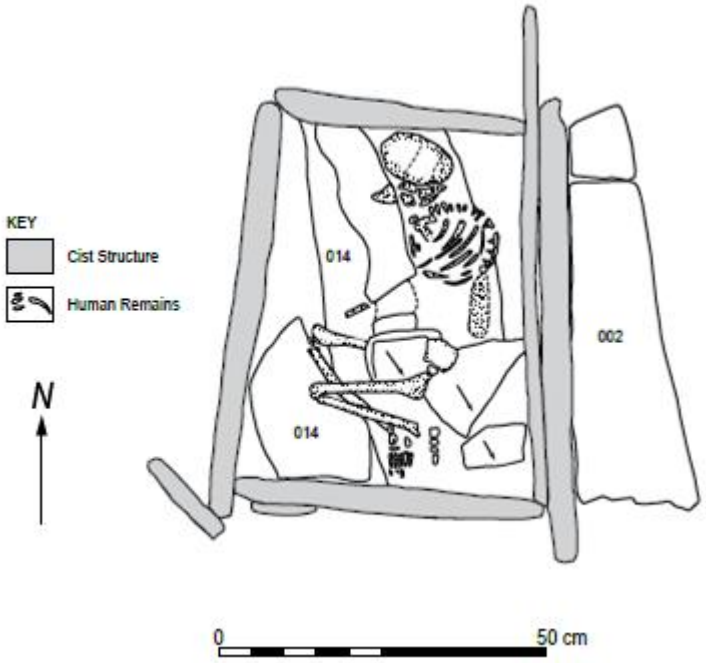

Figure 7.34: *Plan of the cist burial at Lopness, Sanday (after Innes, L. 2016: Figure 2)*

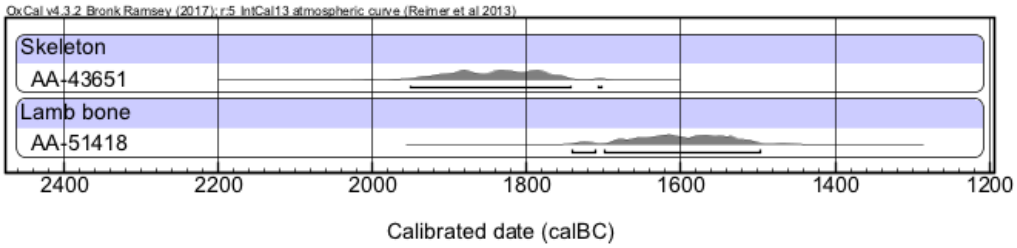

Figure 7.35: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for Lopness, Sanday (Innes, L. 2016: Table 2)*

Given the large body of unidentified vessels, the confidence of this statement is questionable, and further analysis of vessels listed in **Appendix C3** is required to refine this view. Each of vessel types discussed above overlap chronologically, predominantly falling post-2200 cal BC (Fig. 7.33), but the Werne (ORK20) vessel could be slightly earlier. The early date for the steatite vessel from Mound 8, Quandale (ORK14), overlaps with dates for the later phases of Tofts Ness (ORK19), where steatite was in use in Phase 2/3 (**Section 7.2.1**). Bucket and tub vessels fall into this period and continue to be employed post-1800 BC. Later examples include the burial from Lopness, Sanday dated to 1950-1730 cal BC (Fig. 7.35). The cist contained the incomplete remains of a single female aged 40-50 years (Fig. 7.34). Over the feet of the remains was a secondary deposit of limpets and the foetal remains of two lambs, possibly deposited along with the midden material after the collapse of the cist roof (Innes, L. 2016: 13). Distributed among the fills of the cist were sherds of at least four pots. The fragmentary

disturbed nature of the pottery suggest that these could be later insertions (MacGregor 2016: 16). V1, a flat-rimmed bucket tub vessel with incised decoration could have been inserted as a token deposit placed with the initial burial (*ibid.*).

All the recorded vessels were associated with cremations – except for Redland (ORK15) and Corrigall (ORK5), where remains were absent. As noted, however, there is evidence suggesting that these cists could have contained cremations (Downes 2005: 295-7). These cremations could have involved several stages. This includes the careful collection and processing of remains following the cremation (Downes 2009: 129). There does not appear to be a distinction in the type of vessel and the nature of burial. In summary vessels were employed in three ways:

- **As accompaniment:** At Redland (ORK15) the presence of residue suggests a fermented honey-based substance (Moffat 1987). At Corrigall (ORK5) and Newhouse (ORK12), the vessels could have performed a similar role.

- **As container:** At Sand Fiold (ORK17) and Quandale (ORK14), the bucket/ tub and Food Vessel were used to contain human remains. This function is commonly attested and many of the vessels listed in **App. C3** were recorded as containing ashes and fragments of cramp.

- **As part of the funerary ritual:** At Kewing (ORK8) there was evidence that the vessel had been placed on the pyre. A similar instance was noted at Werne (ORK20). This role could overlap with the first, in that vessels were placed as an accompaniment for the deceased, being destroyed through cremation. This role is hard to detect, but it is possible it is underrepresented. Steatite urns may have been placed directly on the pyre (Sharman 2007:23)

A variety of cists are employed, including examples with multiple chambers, which could date to the earlier 3rd millennium, and more typical short cists (Simpson, D. *et al.* 2007). At Corrigall (ORK8), the cremation may have been removed (Downes 2005: 297), whilst at Sand Fiold (ORK17) the tall high-shouldered Food Vessel was moved within the cist. As at chambered cairns, burials were moved about and further remains added. This is, of course, not to suggest a direct continuation of ideas, but to impart the notion that cists could play larger roles than simply being the final resting place for certain individuals. Instead, cists were part of wider relations involving the negotiation of matters of the living and the dead, providing

focal points for activity and deposition. These burials could have provided a key locus for the community, a concept returned to in the conclusion of the chapter.

7.5 Chambered cairns: Non-funerary

7.5.1 Introduction

Alongside funerary activity there is evidence for a variety of depositional activities at chambered cairns. These involve the insertion of whole - or fragmentary vessels – into mounds or chambers. At Isbister a cache of objects was found in the wall head, comprising axe heads, a knife, a mace head and a jet button (Hedges 1983: 45). Other deposits of the period include a variety of animal and human remains, including the dog skulls from Cuween, the human remains from Blackhammer and eagle bones from Isbister (*cf.* Sheridan 2005: 182; Ashmore 2005b: 177; Jones A. 1998). In several cases, sites show evidence for deliberate dismantling, with the removal of the roof and subsequent infilling (Henshall 1963: 120; Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1989: 60). In other instances, the structure is modified over successive periods. The chambered cairn at Howe (ORK7) was converted to a roundhouse and a broch after a lengthy period of abandonment (Ballin Smith 1994: 26).

At four chambered cairns, ceramic finds were recorded: Knowe of Yarso (ORK9), Calf of Eday Long (ORK4), Howe (ORK7) and Holm of Papa Westray North (ORK13) (Fig. 7.36) (**App. A2.3**). These were predominantly of the stalled variety, with only a single Maes Howe type recorded at Howe (ORK7). In the following section, each of these sites is examined in turn, critiquing contexts, the types of ceramic vessels recovered and the nature of depositional practice.

7.5.2 Knowe of Yarso (ORK9)

Contexts

Comprising a stalled chamber contained within a roughly rectangular cairn, the Knowe of Yarso (ORK9) demonstrates a long and complex sequence of usage. The inner chamber is divided into four compartments, accessed by a long narrow passage. Human remains, and other artefacts were recovered from the inner chamber (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1989: 138-9).

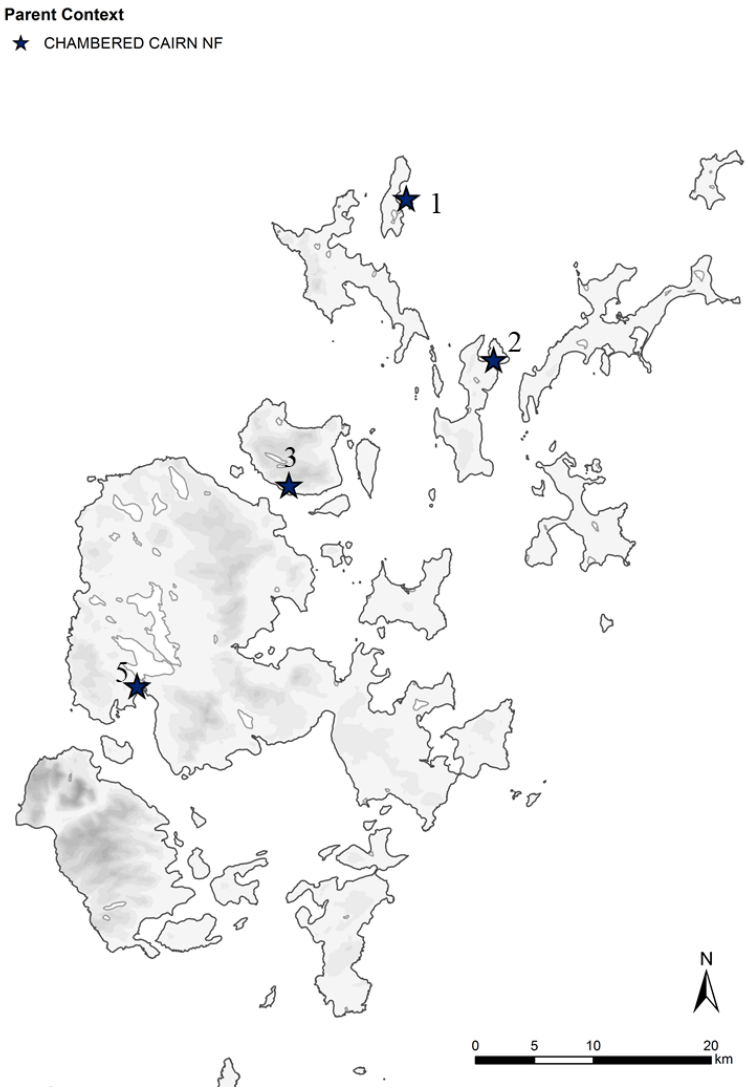

Figure 7.36: *Distribution of chambered cairns with non-funerary deposits in Orkney:*

Key: ***1.*** *Papa Westray North (ORK13), Papa Westray,* ***2.*** *Calf of Eday Long (ORK4), Eday,* ***3.*** *Knowe of Yarso (ORK9), Rousay,* ***4.*** *Howe (ORK7), Mainland*

Artefacts

From the chambered cairn the remains of at least twenty-nine individuals, along with a quantity of animal bones, were recorded (Callander & Grant 1935: 332-40). A large assemblage of flint tools was recovered, including a barbed and tanged arrowhead. These are generally dated to the later 3rd millennium BC (see Green 1980). Among the pottery were sherds identified as Beaker and Food Vessel (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1989: 139; Callander & Grant 1935: 340). The Food Vessel (EO446), comprising a basal sherd, and three wall

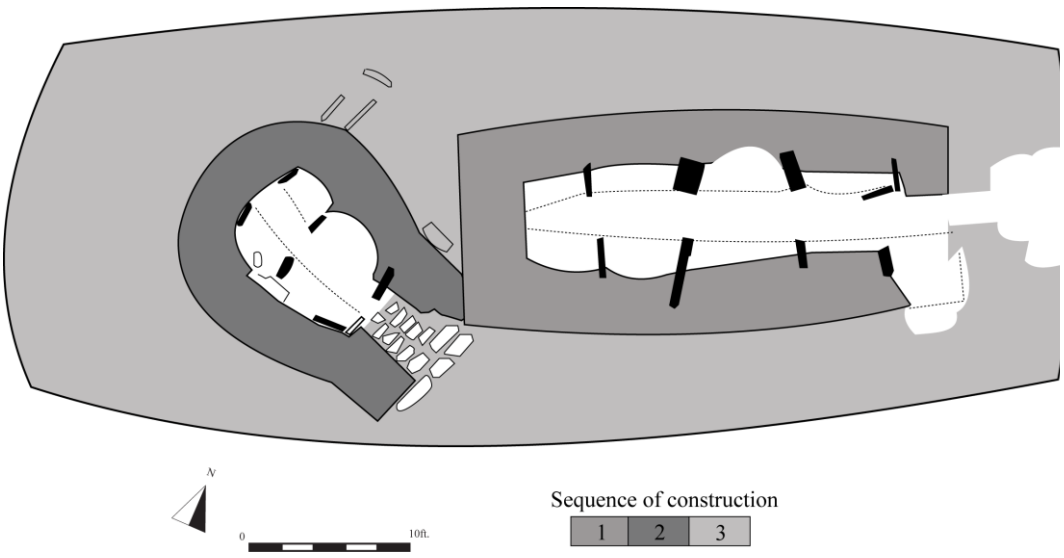

Figure 7.37: *Simplified plan of the Calf of Eday Long (ORK4), Eday (after Callander & Grant 1935: Fig 3)*

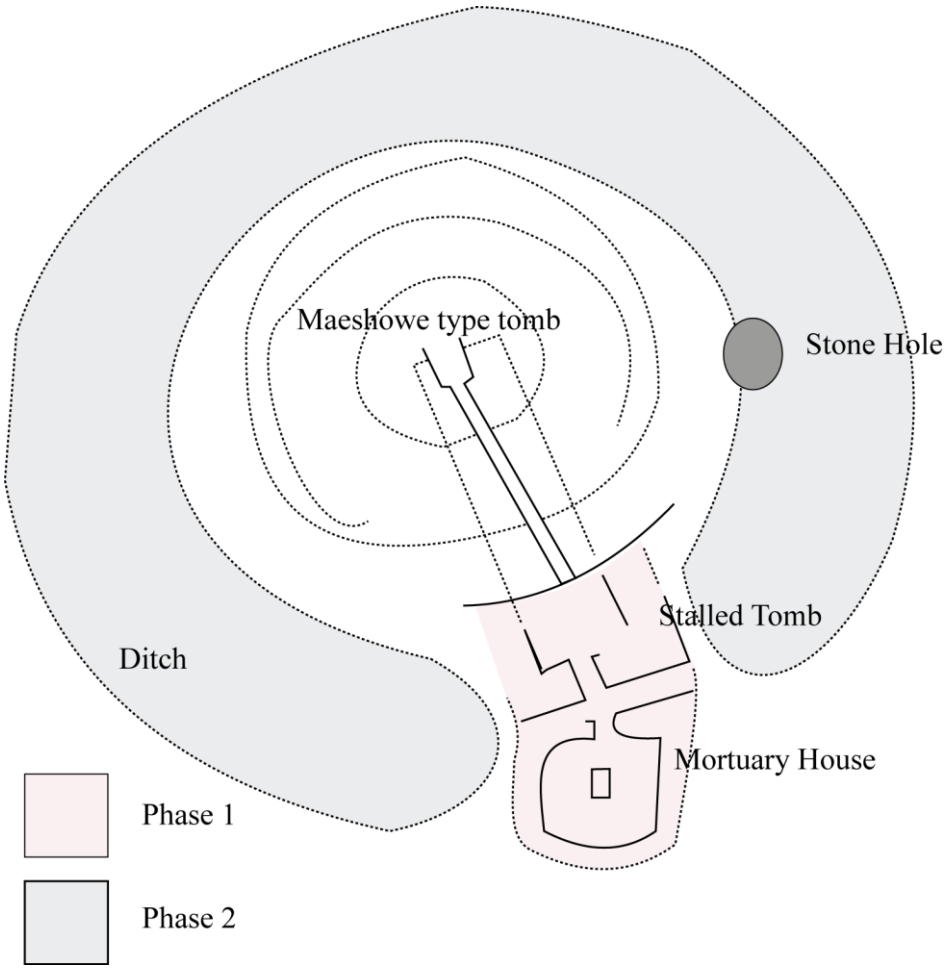

Figure 7.38: *Plan of structures and features at Howe (ORK7), Mainland. See Table 7.8 for summary of phasing (after Ballin Smith 1994: Illus 4)*

sherds came from two different locations. The basal sherd came from the top of the stony fill, whilst the wall sherds came from further down (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1989: 140). The sherds are of a dark ware with vertical incised zig zag decoration. The three pieces of the wall came from Cell 3B, near two skulls, one of which contained a deer tooth (Callander & Grant 1935: 334-8). A sherd decorated with two horizontal lines and short oblique lines above was recovered from the lowest level in the compartment, whilst the other Beaker sherd (EO457) came from a similar context (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1989: 140). The sherd was decorated with an incised zig zag pattern.

Given the highly fragmentary nature of the sherds, caution should be exercised attributing them to specific traditions. Indeed, all that can be stated with confidence is that incised sherds were associated with the later phases of the site. Whilst the style of decoration on EO446 is like other known Food Vessels (Fig. 2.9), these traits are not wholly diagnostic. In the case of EO457, this style of decoration is also not diagnostic, and is found among Grooved Ware, as seen among the earlier assemblage at Pool (*e.g.* PL6065). The final piece EO458, is similarly undiagnostic. These sherds rather than being Beakers or Food Vessels, could be of similar form to the incised vessels identified at the Braes Ha'Breck (ORK3) and Tofts Ness (ORK19).

Chronology

A single date on a sample of red deer bone places activity at the site to 2930-2600 cal BC (Q-155) (**App. F2**), but the precise context of the date is unclear. It is, however, probable that the pottery relates to a phase after this date based on parallel with other Orcadian sites.

7.5.3 Calf of Eday Long (ORK4)

Contexts

The long cairn of the Calf of Eday Long (ORK4) is unusual in that the cairn seals two chambers (Fig. 7.37). The second of these, at the west end of the cairn, is likely earlier. As at the Holm of Papa Westray (ORK13), the additional chamber likely represents a later phase of activity (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1989: 107). The primary chamber was divided into four compartments. The interior of this chamber was filled with a layer of windblown sand that had accumulated after the removal of the roof (Calder 1937: 122). This layer was in turn sealed by a layer of Iron Age refuse.

Phase	Details
Phase 1: Stone setting	Large flat-bottomed pit (similar to Barnhouse Odin (ORK1)). Single horizontal slab at base, probably to hold standing stone. Possibly removed when P2 structure built.
Phase 1: Sub-rectangular structure	First building on site comprise a sub-rectangular or pentagonal structure. Interpreted as a funerary structure.
Phase 1: Modifications	Remodelling of P1 sub-rectangular structure, construction of stalled chamber. P1 structure possible adapted to act as forecourt to stalled chamber.
Phase 1: Abandonment	Length of use unclear, but end of activity appears to have been triggered by collapse of E wall and N wall of forecourt structure.
Phase 2: Maes Howe type chambered cairn	Levelling of earlier structures. Construction of chamber with three side cells and entrance passage. Surrounded by a ditch.

Table 7.10: *Phasing at Howe (ORK7), Mainland*

Artefacts

The assemblage contained a mix of Unstan bowls and probable later Iron Age types (Callander 1937: 134). Within this mixed group, Henshall identified EO643 as a Beaker (1963: 191). Comprising a small portion of the base in a coarse fabric, decorated with diagonal incisions, the assignation of this sherd, as at the Knowe of Yarso (ORK9), is tentative given the absence of diagnostic elements. Alternatively, the fragment could have formed part of a collared bowl, of which several types are present in the assemblage. Given the stratigraphic uncertainties, with much of the pottery coming from a dump within the stalled cairn (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1989: 109), it is difficult to establish chronological relationships within the assemblage.

Figure 7.39: *Rim (middle) and body sherds (left, right) from Howe (ORK7), Mainland (© Tankerness House)*

7.5.4 Howe (ORK7)

Contexts

The chambered cairn of Howe (ORK7) encompasses several phases (Table 7.10, Fig. 7.38). From disturbed deposits outside the Phase 2 structure came several sherds of a Beaker (Fig. 7.39). The sequence leading to the abandonment of the structure is unclear owing to later disturbance in the Iron Age and Norse periods (Ballin Smith 1994: 25). It is uncertain whether the disturbed deposits were a structured deposition or associated with funerary activity.

Artefacts

Four sherds of a Beaker were found in disturbed deposits outside the Phase 2 entrance. The vessel is a cupped-necked form, but only the upper portion of the body and rim remain (Fig. 7.39). The body is decorated with a series of cockle shell impressions, which are also noted at the Holm of Papa Westray North (ORK13) (Fig. 7.41). Two further sherds of a second vessel SF6962 were recovered, decorated with lines of comb impressions. The use of chevrons and lines are comparable to those found on the Beaker from Rinyo (ORK16)

7.5.5 Papa Westray North (ORK13)

Contexts

The chambered cairn comprised a rectangular cairn with a stalled chamber. The stalled chamber was divided into four compartments with a rear chamber (Fig. 7.40). The rear chamber appears to be primary, with the stalled cairn being constructed later (Ritchie, A. 2009: 3). This cell was later blocked off following the construction of the stalled chamber. Phase 4 of the site saw the removal of the roof and the deliberate infilling of the structure. The final phase saw the dismantling of parts of the exterior of the cairn and new structures added (*ibid.*).

Artefacts

A variety of human remains, and pottery were recovered from within the chamber. Further sherds indicating secondary activity were recovered from around the cairn (Ritchie, A. 2009: 36). These included several sherds of Grooved Ware. From outside the rear of the cairn on the west and south came three sherds decorated with horizontal lines of shell-impressed decoration (Figs. 7.40 & 7.41). Two of the sherds join, demonstrating the link between the west and south deposits (*ibid.*). The sherds are small and fragmentary with coarse fabrics. The form of the vessels is suggestive of the neck of a Beaker (Ritchie, A. 2009: 36).

Chronology

The finds were in Layer IV.1, associated with the end of the cairn (*ibid.*: 22). The dates for this layer suggest abandonment *c.* 2870-2570 cal BC (Oxa-17782) (**App. F2**) and 2860-2490 cal BC (OxA-17781) (**App. F2**)[12]. The degree of association between these dates and the probable Beaker and Grooved Ware is unclear. The Beaker associated with the limpet midden is likely to post-date these two dates, based on analogy with dating of other Orcadian Beakers.

7.5.6 Summary

The pottery from chambered cairns represent an eclectic mix of types. The inclusion of vessels appears to be accidental, with pot sherds mixed in the infilling material. At Papa Westray (ORK13), the deposition of the pottery appears to be related to the limpet deposits, which

[12] *These dates were adjusted by Ashmore to account for potential marine bias in the sample (2009: 60)*

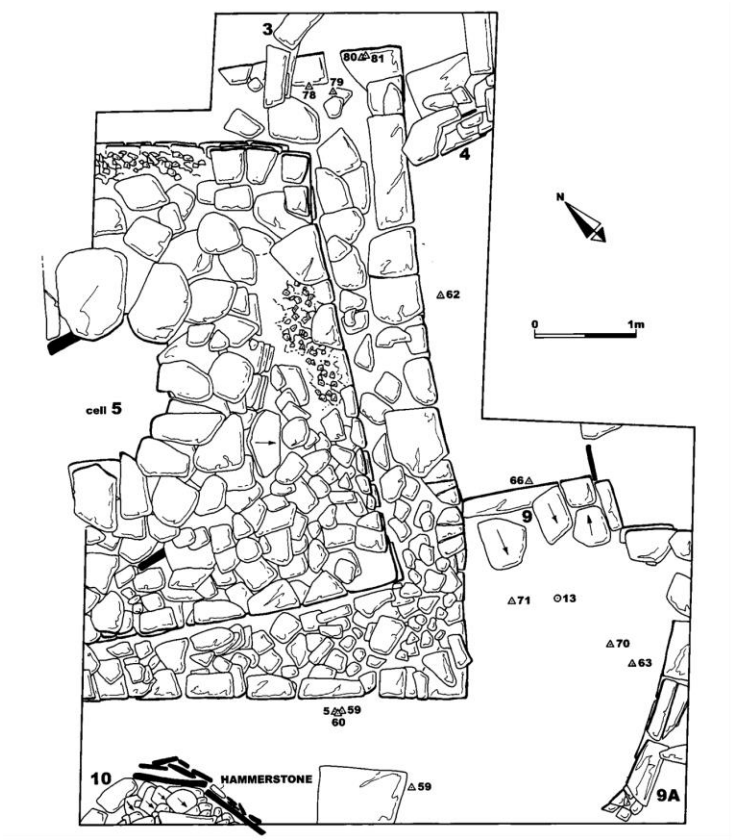

Figure 7.40: *Rear of the cairn at Holm of Papa Westray North (ORK13), Papa Westray showing later external structures and location of finds (Ritchie, A. 2009: Illus 22)*

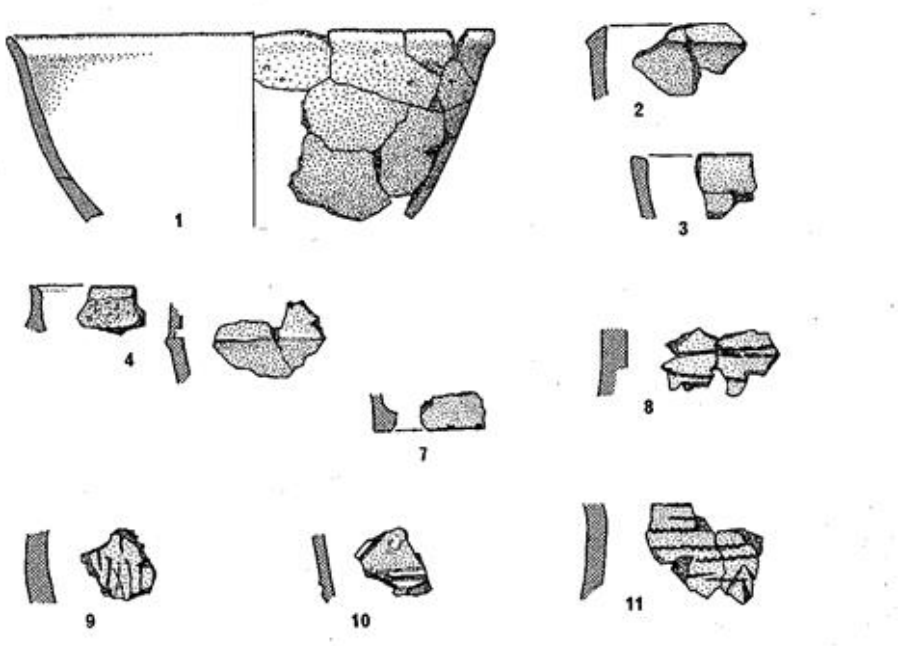

Figure 7.41: *Pottery from Holm Papa Westray North (ORK13), Papa Westray (Ritchie, A. 2009: Illus 25):*

Key: ***1-4.*** *Bowls,* ***8-9.*** *Probable Beaker,* ***10.*** *Grooved Ware*

postdate the use of the chambered cairn. These deposits could be related to the sealing of the chamber but deriving from possible occupation material. The association of Grooved Ware with possible occupation deposits could indicate the presence of settlement but the interpretation of these structures is tentative (Ritchie, A. 2009: 28). The limpet shells could derive from these possible occupation deposits, being employed as a filling material in the chambered cairn (Barber 1997: 7). At Howe (ORK7) it was suggested by the excavator that the presence of the Beaker vessel could be related to the final phases of use, whilst at the Knowe of Yarso (ORK9) the inclusion of ceramic material appears accidental. The chronology of these patterns of infilling are unclear, but it can be broadly argued that most of the sites discussed here had fallen out of use by at least 2300 BC, when Beakers are first used in Orkney. These changes in the use of chambered cairns can be situated within the wider suite of changes taking place during the later 3rd millennium BC as previously discussed in the case of domestic activity.

7.6 Summary: Regional characteristics

In summary, vessels from Orkney represent an eclectic mix that shows internal development and external influence. Whilst parallels for some elements of the assemblage can be found, direct patterns are lacking. In this section I will summarize the principal form groups examining their physical and contextual aspects, building a clear summary of ceramics in the Orkney Isles drawing on the preceding information (Table 7.11).

7.6.1 Beaker

Beakers are rare, with examples recorded from several sites. These range from sinuous – as at Rinyo (ORK16) – and carinated, at the Links of Noltland (ORK10). As discussed, the vessels from Crossiecrown (ORK6) are predominantly bucket/ tub, with SF229 the clearest example of a probable Beaker, but this vessel is unlike the other Beakers recorded from Orkney. Given the presence of only a single vessel of this type, its position in the overall sequence is unclear, but recalls the situation at the Ness of Gruting (SFI5), where multiple regional forms were noted (Table 6.7). SF229 from Crossiecrown (ORK6) is similar to the convex/ sinuous sherd 185 from Sumburgh Airport (SFI13). The remaining probable Beaker sherds from chambered cairns are highly fragmentary and the attribution of form tentative. The finds from Papa Westray (ORK13) could be related to domestic activities and be added to the limited domestic finds of Beakers. The use of shell-impressed decoration is unusual, being noted only on the

Beaker vessel from Howe (ORK7). This was, however, recorded among sites in the Shetland Isles and examples are found at other Scottish dune sites, including Sanna Bay (SH3).

Decorative techniques are principally comb and twisted cord, often arranged in broad zones. As noted prior, these techniques are novel developments, not being found among Grooved Ware in Orkney. The context and function of these vessels is difficult to determine, but they appear to be involved in closure/ final deposits at several sites. This includes the accidental mixing of Beaker sherds in occupation refuse which was employed to backfill chambered cairns. None of the sherds could be closely related to funerary activity. At Howe (ORK7) the relatively unabraded condition of the sherds could indicate that this vessel was deliberately placed within the chamber, being disturbed during the Iron Age use of the site. Motifs include chevrons, which occur on multiple vessels. These motifs are found in earlier periods and are unlikely to have a single origin point. The use of this motif in the later 3rd millennium need not necessarily be the result of influence from the south. Instead, the use of chevrons could reflect an increased preference for simpler designs. This could in turn be connected to wider changes in the scale and nature of consumption in the period. The second possibility is the sharing of motifs between Shetland and Orkney. Close parallels can be found for several motifs at Tofts Ness (ORK19) and sites in Shetland. Whilst Beakers are deployed in a variety of contexts, they do not appear to be employed in funerary practices. Instead, a variety of other burial rites are practised, including crouched inhumations, although these are poorly dated. In short, as in Shetland, where Beakers are recorded, they are associated with domestic or closure deposits often fitting into existing assemblages. Beakers are not highly coded, but a range of variations exist across the archipelago, with select aspects blended into the creation of forms that are neither Beaker nor Grooved Ware.

7.6.2 Food Vessels

The use of Food Vessels is limited and comprises the examples from Corrigall (ORK5) and Redland (ORK15), which occupy the smaller size range. The vessel from Sand Fiold (ORK17) occupies the larger end of the spectrum. These larger vessels are categorised in a similar fashion to bucket/ tub vessels, but signal connections with areas to the south. In contrast to Beakers, these vessels are principally categorised through their use in funerary practices and are – in comparison to bucket/ tub vessels – limited. Dating evidence is restricted, but there does appear to be a degree of overlap between the types. Given the small size of the dataset, little else can stated regarding their relationships. The decoration of the Corrigall (ORK5) vessel overlaps with motifs found on Beakers to the south, but infilled triangle motifs can be found among the Grooved Ware repertoire (see Thomas, A. 2016). As argued above, these

Form	Site Type	Sub-Form	Key Characteristics	Notes
Beaker	Funerary Domestic Chamber tombs	S-profile, necked forms also known Cupped-necked	RD:160-260mm Dec: Comb shell, cord Motifs: Herringbone, chevrons – typically arranged in bands	Sherds recovered from domestic sites incl. Crossiecrown (ORK6), Links of Noltland (ORK10) and Rinyo (ORK16). Possible example from Barnhouse Odin (ORK1) but could also be high-shouldered vessel
? Food Vessel?	Funerary	Small high-shouldered Tall high-shouldered	RD:87-380mm Height: 92-470mm Dec: Cord, incision Motifs: Infilled triangles,	Tall high-shouldered vessel can be paralleled with Cowies Food Vessel Urn group (1978)
Bucket/ tub	Domestic Funerary	Angled to barrel shaped profiles	RD:160mm Dec: Incision Motifs: Herringbone, chevrons – typically arranged in bands	Within this group a series of incised vessels can be defined. These employ incised motifs often arranged into zones, echoing zonal decoration of Beakers.
Steatite	Funerary	Bucket/ tub forms	n/a	Associated primarily with cremation burials

Table 7.11: *Summary of principal forms recorded from Orkney*

motifs could have been drawn from the existing artistic milieu rather than imported from other regions.

7.6.3 Bucket/ tub

The key form moving into the late 3rd millennium BC continues to be bucket/ tub vessels. These can be argued to represent a continuation of earlier Grooved Ware forms and other undecorated bucket/ tub vessels. The decoration of these vessels shows a marked point of departure, with the decline of elaborate applied decorative schemes. These schemes, enmeshed in ideas of identity and membership, become less significant, although the basic form is retained. There is a continuation of bucket-shaped forms post-2500 BC, divided into a group

of incised vessels and undecorated forms, used both in domestic and funerary contexts. In a domestic context, vessels appear to be principally involved in preparation and consumption as evidenced at Tofts Ness (ORK19) where few large vessels were present. At Crossiecrown (ORK6), changes in the assemblage over time are difficult to analyse. As at Tofts Ness (ORK19), there appears to be a continuation of bucket/ tub forms, used alongside examples of Beakers. One important change is the emergence of a series of incised vessels using chevron motifs. It is possible that the preference for arranging motifs in zones cites decorative arrangements recorded on Beakers. These incised wares also reflect on links between Orkney and Shetland during the late 3rd millennium. As seen at Tofts Ness (ORK19), this is supported by the presence of steatite, which is increasingly employed in cremation burials in the 2nd millennium.

Bucket/ tub vessels are frequently used as containers for cremation burials in the late 3rd and 2nd millennium BC. The forms and size ranges of these vessels overlap, although the range of sizes is greater in a domestic context. The use of large bucket/ tub vessels in burials overlaps with the use of imported steatite from Shetland. Such vessels have been argued to represent high status pottery, owing to the effort involved in procurement. These vessels do not appear to have been employed in domestic contexts (Smith, A. 2007: 286) and are almost exclusive to funerary contexts. This suggests that steatite was primarily categorised through its use in funerary rites, in some cases being placed directly onto the pyre. This contrasts with Shetland where steatite is widely recorded from both funerary and domestic sites.

Of course, clay and steatite vessels are but one type of container and the possibility of organic vessels cannot be discounted (**Section 2.5.2**). As noted, organic materials are well documented across Orkney, being used as covers, wraps or containers.

7.6.4 Summary: Forms and relations

Bucket/ tub vessels are by far the most common vessel in use, with Beakers and Food Vessels limited to a few contexts. Beakers are frequently found with bucket/ tub forms, but not with Food Vessels, which are at present only noted from funerary contexts. There is a broad sharing of decorative motifs across the various forms with twisted cord and incisions being regularly noted across all types. Bucket/ tub vessels from funerary contexts are frequently undecorated, except for the vessel from Newhouse (ORK16), which is stylistically similar to the broader suite of incised bucket/ tub vessels from the region. Vessels appear to play a limited role in funerary practices, until the advent of cremation practices, in which pots are frequently employed as containers. This includes changes in depositional contexts, with pit depositions

occurring alongside cist burials. The chronology of these changes and overlap with the domestic sphere is explored in the next section.

7.7 Summary & Conclusions

In this chapter I have examined the ceramic evidence from across Orkney in the later 3rd millennium BC. This evidence shows points of continuity and departure with the earlier 3rd millennium BC. The re-dating of Pool and dating from the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), Crossiecrown (ORK6), imply a degree of continuity of settlement and practice as late as the 23rd century cal BC. Occupation at Crossiecrown (ORK6) could have extended beyond this point (Fig. 7.16). This occurs alongside continued activity at several other sites not discussed here including Skara Brae (Shepherd, A. 2016; see Table 7.2). As seen at the Ness of Brodgar (ORK11), at several sites large final deposits are associated with the final phases of the site (Towers *et al.* 2015: 22). Similar patterns of infill and closure can be observed at chambered cairns. As at Isbister, these processes could involve the deposition of specific artefacts or animal remains.

Monumental activity seems to have declined during the late 3rd millennium. The large hall-like structures of the earlier 3rd millennium are generally absent from the later 3rd millennium BC, with several showing signs of infilling and decommissioning. This decline should not be equated with a dramatic end but instead can be viewed as the outcome of a variety of long term processes. Change within the region instead can be envisaged as a series of gradual and cumulative processes rather than episodic (Ballin Smith 2014: 140)[13]. In contrast, there are degrees of continuity among dispersed settlements, with periodic episodes of rebuilding, as at Tofts Ness (ORK19) and Crossiecrown (ORK6). As highlighted in **Chapter 5**, the growth, expansion and contraction of these sites is closely tied into wider processes, including competitive feasting and consumption. Grooved Ware played a key role in these processes, alongside distinct architectural forms. These processes, whilst coded, were subject to renegotiation with change frequently taking place. This dynamism can be attributed to causality and feedback within the assemblage, creating inherent tensions. These tensions led to varied responses, involving the creation of new material forms or the decline of assemblages.

[13] *Change could have been affected not only by human factors, but natural changes in the environment, which could have created deterritorializing effects (see Farrell, M. 2009; Tipping et al. 2012)*

As discussed regarding domestic pottery, changes occurred around the contexts in which vessels were deployed. The nature of the pots, however, does not undergo major modification, except in the choice of motifs and their arrangement. In the case of bucket/ tub vessels this includes a switch to incised or undecorated vessels. The loss of more elaborate decoration can be viewed as signalling a change in the role of vessels, moving from visible roles in consumptive events to more utilitarian roles. In the case of Tofts Ness (ORK19), there is little visible change in assemblage, apart from the appearance of decoration. Eventually, these overlap with the funerary sphere, serving to contain food and the dead.

As highlighted throughout this chapter, in certain contexts these are deployed or intermixed with elements of new types, including Beakers. New pot types do not appear to be highly coded. Instead, as in Shetland, these are mutable with decoration carried from one type to another. As in the Shetland Isles, a suite of regional forms emerges in Orkney, drawing on external developments from the Scottish mainland and from further north in the Shetland Isles. The exchange of steatite provides one tangible strand of evidence for such contact, but, as noted in **Chapter 5**, this contact was likely longstanding. Tofts Ness (ORK19) could have represented one point through which this exchange occurred, acting in a similar capacity to Bradley's maritime havens (**Section 2.5.1**). As discussed, it is tempting to link the changes in ceramics to these wider networks. Steatite is notably employed in cremation practices, which are increasingly employed in the region from around the 21st century BC (Sheridan 2007a: 171). Whilst inhumations have been documented, their dating is unclear, and they do not appear to have been strongly associated with pottery, drawing further parallel with Shetland. This, as will be examined in the following chapters, stands in contrast to the frequent association of pottery and crouched inhumations in the Highlands.

CHAPTER EIGHT
THE NORTH HIGHLANDS

8.1 Introduction

Thirty-five sites were examined from the North Highlands, equating to two domestic assemblages and twenty-eight funerary sites (Fig. 8.1) (**Apps. A3.1** & **A3.2**). Funerary sites included multiple examples of short-cists with Beakers or Food Vessels. These were distributed in two clusters. The first, in southeast Sutherland extended from the Dornoch Firth to north of the Loth Burn (Fig. 8.8). A second cluster of funerary sites was located inland, along Loch Fleet and the Lairg district (Fig. 8.7). Three further funerary finds were recorded from the northwest of Sutherland. A further group of funerary sites in Caithness is distributed roughly southeast to northwest, extending from Loch Watenan to Dounreay (Fig. 8.9). Further finds of later 3rd millennium pottery were recorded at five chambered cairns, principally comprising stray finds. In several cases stray finds in chambered cairns were found alongside funerary finds.

8.2 Domestic Sites

8.2.1 Nature of the evidence

Domestic assemblages are limited to two sites (Fig. 8.2) (Table 8.1)[1]. The bulk of the available data stems from the poorly stratified site at Freswick Sands (NH18), better known for its Norse remains (Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998: 196). An array of material has been documented from the Freswick area since the early 20th century. In the 1930s Lacaille excavated what he interpreted as a Mesolithic flint assemblage with later deposits of cord impressed pottery

*[1] A second coastal dune site is documented at Littleferry, Sutherland which produced a variety of flints and early Bronze Age pottery. These include a probable Cordoned Urn and a further urn decorated with impressed circles (Anderson & Black 1888) (see **App. D3**). It is unclear if these relate to funerary activity. The pottery from the site was not included in this project. See Clarke, D.V. 2004 for details of the flint assemblage, and Bradley et al. 2015: Table 3 for details of the site). Maggot impressed sherds were recorded from Wetweather Cave, suggesting a late Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age date (Pollard 1996: 22).*

Site	Code	Parent Context/ Sub-context	Reference
Freswick Sands	NH18	Sand dune/ Midden	Scott, W. 1951
Alt Na Fearna	NH5	Structure/s	McCullagh & Tipping 1998

Table 8.1: *Principal domestic sites discussed in text (see **Apps. H1 & H2** for definitions of parent and sub-contexts)*

(1937: 63, 1954: 266)[2]. Gibson in his analysis suggested that the Prehistoric pottery represented a "*neat domestic assemblage*" (1982: 158), although there are no associated structures[3]. Furthermore, the material from Freswick Sands (NH18) derives from several locations, and it is unclear if these finds equate to a single 'settlement' site (Scholma-Mason pers. obs.)[4]. Eight houses were recorded at the Alt na Fearna quarry site (NH5) during survey and excavation in the 1990s. Whilst there is slight evidence for early 3rd millennium activity, the bulk of the excavated house sites are dated to the 2nd millennium (McCullagh & Tipping 1998: Table 5). These are often sited upon earlier agricultural activity, and in the case of House 2 atop a series of cremation burials (Table 8.1, Fig. 8.4).

8.2.2 Freswick Sands (NH18)

The Assemblage

The extensive assemblage from Freswick Sands (NH18) encompasses an array of forms extending from the early to later 3rd millennium[5] (Figs. 5.34 & 8.3). Similar long-term sequences have been noted at other sand dune sites, including Brackmont Mill and Tentsmuir (**Section 2.5.1**). The bulk of the Freswick Sands (NH18) sherds derive from earlier Grooved Ware, discussed previously (**Section 5.4.2**, Fig. 5.34). Alongside these are a series of probable Beakers and shouldered vessels, but the assemblage is highly fragmentary (Fig. 8.3). Other vessels such as FS1.28 sport a concave internal bevel, like those from the Scord of Brouster (SFI8) and could belong to the later 3rd or early 2nd millennium, owing to its similarity with

[2] As Batey noted in her examination of the Norse material, these flints could be Bronze Age in date, rather than Mesolithic (1984: 151).
[3] Edwards (1925.89-94) discovered the remains of oval houses and midden. He dated these to the pre-Norse period, but re-examination suggests these to be Norse rather than prehistoric (Batey 1984)
[4] These excavations have seen limited publication, with the focus of research typically on the Norse remains from the dunes.
[5]A limited sample of these were examined in the NMS but owing to the large size of the assemblage and lack of contextual information, full rerecording of the assemblage was deemed to be of limited value.

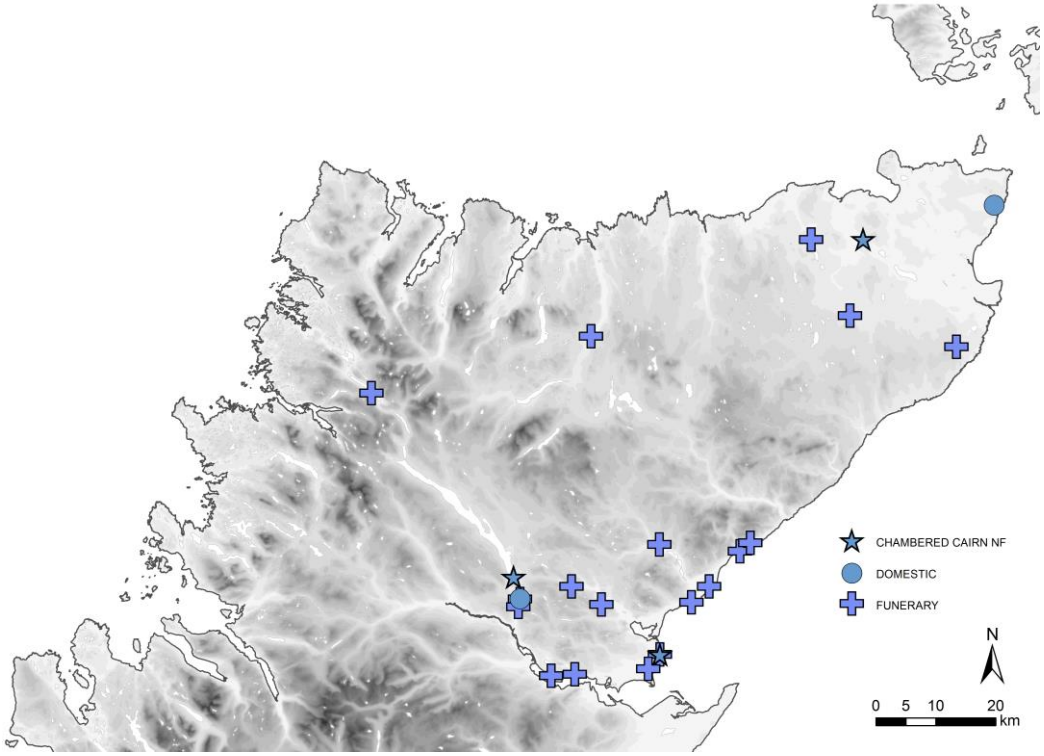

Figure 8.1: *Distribution of sites in North Highlands by site type (see Table 1.1. for definition of site types)*

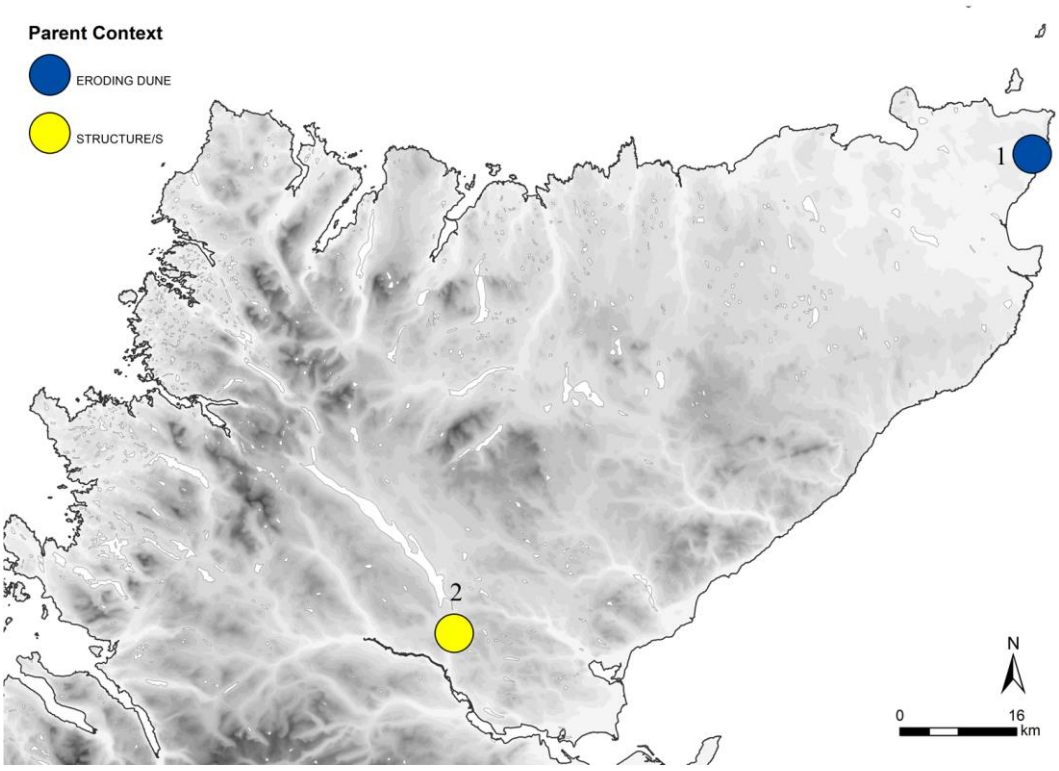

Figure 8.2: *Distribution of principal domestic pottery assemblages in the North Highlands discussed in the text:*

Key: ***1.*** *Freswick Sands (NH18), Caithness* ***2.*** *Alt Na Fearna (NH5), Sutherland*

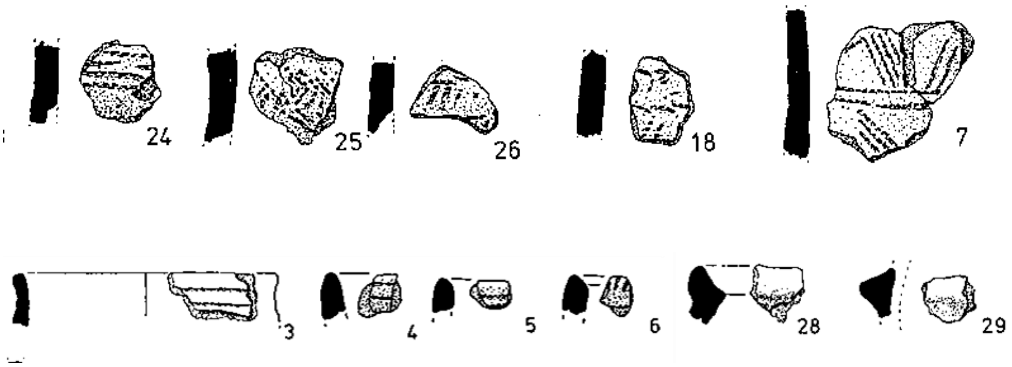

Figure 8.3: *Later 3rd millennium pottery from Freswick Sands (NH18), Caithness (after Gibson, A. 1982) (not to scale)*

other 'urns' (Gibson, A. 1982: 158). Gibson identifies further 'urn' sherds among the assemblage, including the lower part of a collar (F.S.1.29) (Fig. 8.3). Several sherds are decorated with comb impressed zig zags and rough z-shapes, reminiscent of designs seen at Culbin Sands, Hedderwick and Northton (Figs. 2.26 & 2.31). The zoned arrangement of one of the sherds is similar to examples from Orkney (Figs. 7.6 & 7.9). Considering the lack of stratigraphic information, further phasing of the pottery is not possible, and the overall chronology of the assemblage remains unclear.

Discussion

The assemblage from Freswick Sands (NH18) likely spans the 3rd millennium. This includes examples of Grooved Ware, Beakers and Food Vessels. Similar long-term sequences can be seen at other coastal sites as at Brackmont Mill and Luce Sands (Fig. 2.11). The use of combed multiple chevrons finds close parallel with Culbin Sands, where cord impressed chevrons were common (Fig. 2.26). Among the assemblage are large vessels which could either be related to storage or funerary roles. Whether, as suggested by Gibson, the assemblage represents a "*neat domestic assemblage*" (1982: 158), is unclear, but given the potentially mixed nature of the site the possibility of multiple phases cannot be ruled out. As suggested recently by Bradley in the case of Luce Sands it is possible to see Freswick Sands (NH18) as a neutral gathering point, where people came into contact, and where objects were manufactured and exchanged (Bradley *et al.* 2015: 1). Freswick Sands (NH18) is ideally placed with its sheltered bay, and proximity to Orkney to act as a nodal point in exchange between Orkney and the Mainland of Scotland. The use of chevrons arranged in bands recalls examples from both Orkney and Shetland and could suggest long distance networks across the North Sea.

8.2.3 Alt Na Fearna

The Assemblage

An assemblage of approximately 760 sherds, representing 155 vessels, was recovered during excavations at Alt Na Fearna (NH5) (MacSween & Dixon 1998: 139). These included vessels found in association with funerary and occupational activity (Table 8.2). The pottery from House 1 comprised three inverted rims: one flat, one internally bevelled and one splayed. V154 was decorated with parallel incised lines, below the rim, running around the vessel (Fig. 8.5). Sherds of V1 and V4 were recovered from a context that represented the vestige of an earlier soil profile below House 1. The authors suggest that these plain wares are contemporary or earlier than the decorated vessels, V155 and V17 from the cremation burials (Fig. 8.26) providing the "*missing domestic assemblage*" (*ibid.*: 141).

Only four sherds of pottery were recovered from House 2. Within the post-House 2 tillage and midden deposits an assemblage of 151 sherds was recovered, representing around 16 vessels (MacSween & Dixon 1998: 141). Like those from the earlier deposits these sherds, were talc tempered, except for V73 and V74 which were finer and lacked talc temper (*ibid.*). The Cordoned Urn found at the nearby ditched enclosure at Achinduich Farm[6] was similarly talc tempered (Cowie, R. 2011: 151) (Fig. 8.41) (see **Section 8.3.3**). V74 was decorated with

Site	Sub site	Ceramic Finds
Alt Na-Fearna Quarry (NH5)	House 1	Ceramics from earlier soil horizon
	House 2	Pottery relating to 2nd mil. Activity. (pre-House 2 activity? Relation to Cremation burial 3), V74, V71
	Cremation Burial 3 (?Pre-H2 activity?)	5 sherds of Food Vessel, fragmentary bone spatulate pin
Achinduich (NH4)	Burial Cairn 1	Food Vessel (V17), ?Beaker? (V75), cannel coal beads, barbed and tanged arrowhead, bone pin. Fragments of 2nd mil. talc tempered pottery.

Table 8.2: *Summary of sites and pottery finds from Lairg (NH5), Sutherland*

[6] *The vessel contained the cremated remains of two individuals, a probable female sub-adult and adult male c.18-30 years old. The burial dates to the 17th century BC falling outside the timeframe of this study (cf. Bradley 2011:147-56).*

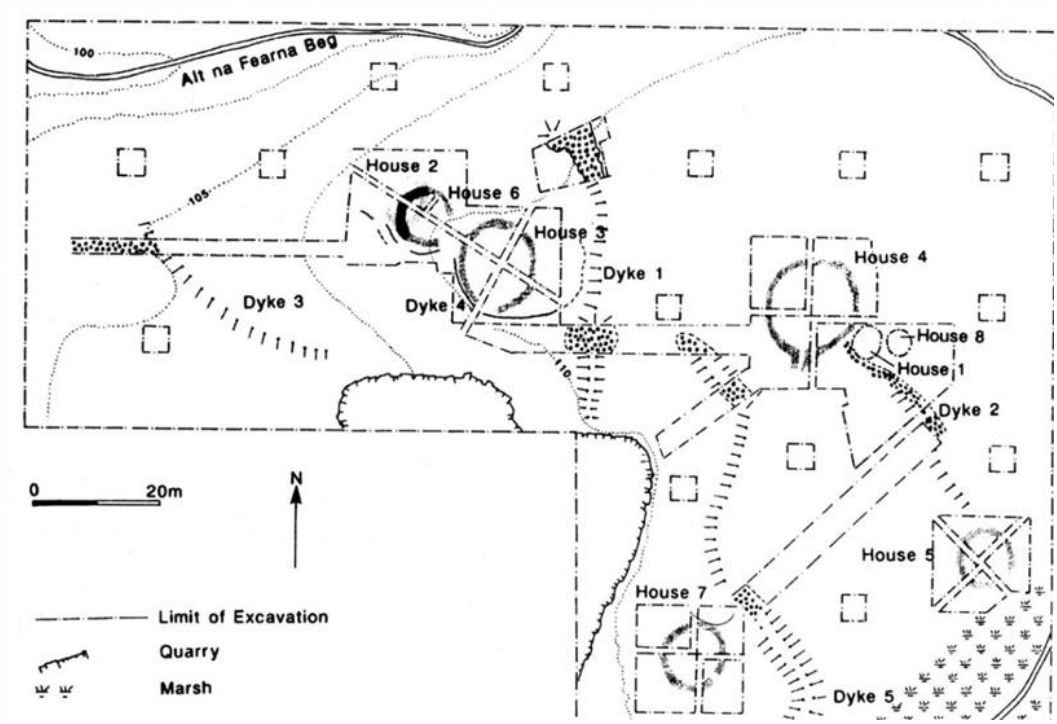

Figure 8.4: *Plan of house sites at Alt Na Fearna (NH5), Sutherland (McCullagh & Tipping 1998)*

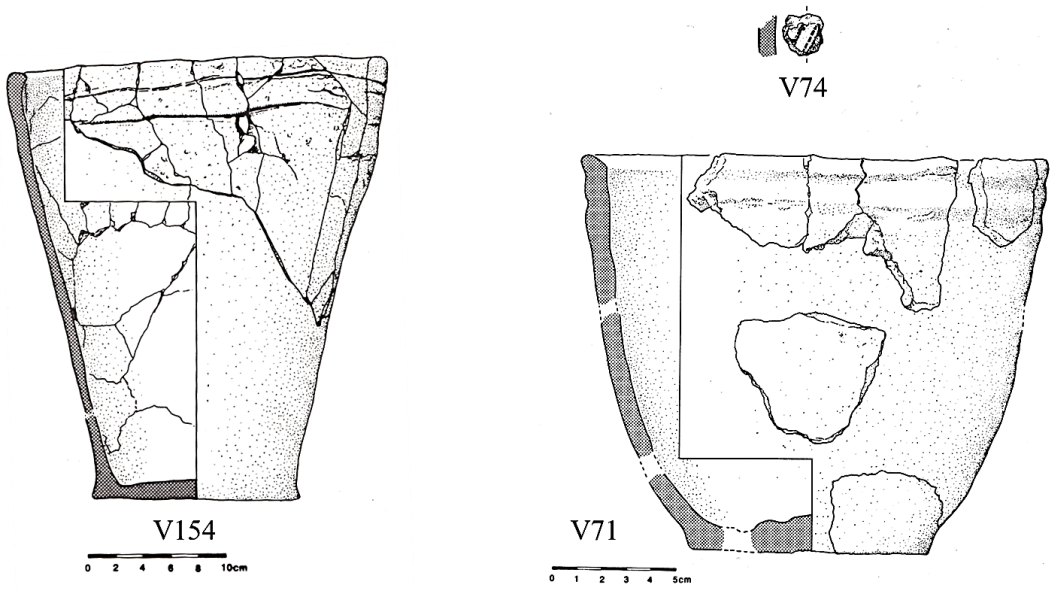

Figure 8.5: *Pottery from H1 & H2, Alt Na Fearna (NH5), Sutherland:*

Key: ***V154*** *with internally projecting rim from H1,* ***V71 & V74*** *from H2 (after McCullagh & Tipping 1998: Figure 90, 92)*

diagonal comb impressions and tentatively identified as a Beaker (MacSween & Dixon 1999: 141) but given the small size of the sherd the exact vessel form is unclear (Fig. 8.5). The mode of decoration is comparable to sherds from Freswick Sands (NH18) (Fig. 8.3). Included in the assemblage were examples of internally bevelled rims, internally projecting rims, and exterior ribbing. V71 has two slightly raised ribs below the rim (Fig. 8.5). The remaining house site produced little diagnostic pottery, and what sherds were recovered share typological characteristics with those from the other house sites.

Discussion

The existence of plain alongside decorated vessels highlights the mixed range of vessels in use. If the plain wares are contemporary with the decorated vessels, this could suggest that decorated vessels were primarily categorised by their use in funerary or other structured deposits (see **Section 8.3**). Plain utilitarian wares likely fulfilled a range of roles including as storage and preparatory vessels. The form of these vessels closely overlaps with those previously classified as 'flat rim ware', but morphologically share aspects in common with Grooved Ware (**Section 5.2.4**). Rather than suggesting a direct connection to Grooved Ware this implies the existence of a suite of long lived plain wares, which see little modification over time. Similar points were raised in the case of Orkney, where bucket/ tub vessels are employed throughout the 3rd and 2nd millennium. Comparable vessels are recorded from cremation burials in the region suggesting a degree of overlap between domestic and funerary vessels in the 2nd millennium.

8.2.4 Chronology

Radiocarbon dates were only available for the sites at Alt Na Fearna (NH5). The dates from House 2 present a broad range from *c.* 2120-1040 cal BC (**App. F3**) (Fig. 8.6). Dates from House 1 cover a narrower date range from *c.* 1930-1440 cal BC (**App. F3**) (Fig. 8.6). As in Shetland, these deposits incorporate vestiges of earlier activity as evidenced by the presence of early pottery, and the dates from Sub-Dyke 2 and Clearance Cairn 0870 (Fig. 5.36). Based on radiocarbon dates it would seem likely that the earlier domestic sherds belong to the tail end of the 3rd millennium pre-dating the use/ construction of House 1, *c.* 1800 cal BC (McCullagh 1998: 36) (Fig. 8.6). The internally bevelled rims could belong to this later 2nd millennium phase of activity. The significance of this will be further examined in relation to the available dates for funerary activity later in this chapter.

8.2.5 Discussion: Domestic Assemblages, types and roles

Given the stratigraphic uncertainties around Freswick Sands (NH18) it is not possible to examine the nature of and interrelationships among the assemblage. Unlike Lairg there is clear evidence of comb impressed vessels being deployed in domestic contexts, mirroring the situation from other Scottish coastal dune sites (**Section 2.5.2**). The material from Alt na Fearna (NH5) comprised more ubiquitous wares lacking the decorated elements of the Freswick Sands (NH18) assemblage. That said Food Vessels and a sherd of a probable Beaker were recovered from funerary and structured deposits. The interrelationship between the two assemblages is unclear, and these vessels could pre-date the more ubiquitous domestic wares (MacSween & Dixon 1998: 142). The fabrics of these vessels differed from their domestic counterparts in the absence of talc, which was used as a tempering agent increasingly from 1800 BC (MacSween & Dixon 1998: 144). V74, from the pre-House 2

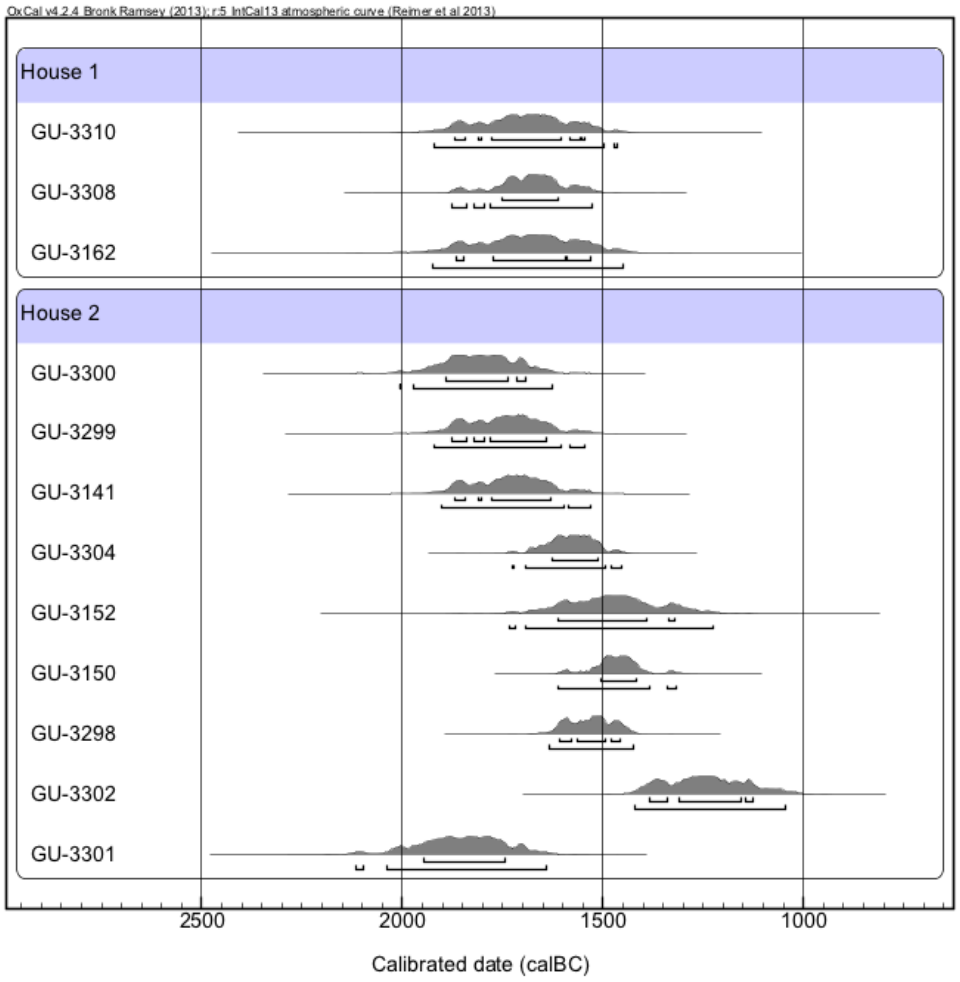

Figure 8.6: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates from Alt Na Fearna, H1 & H2 (NH5), Sutherland (see **App. F3** for details)*

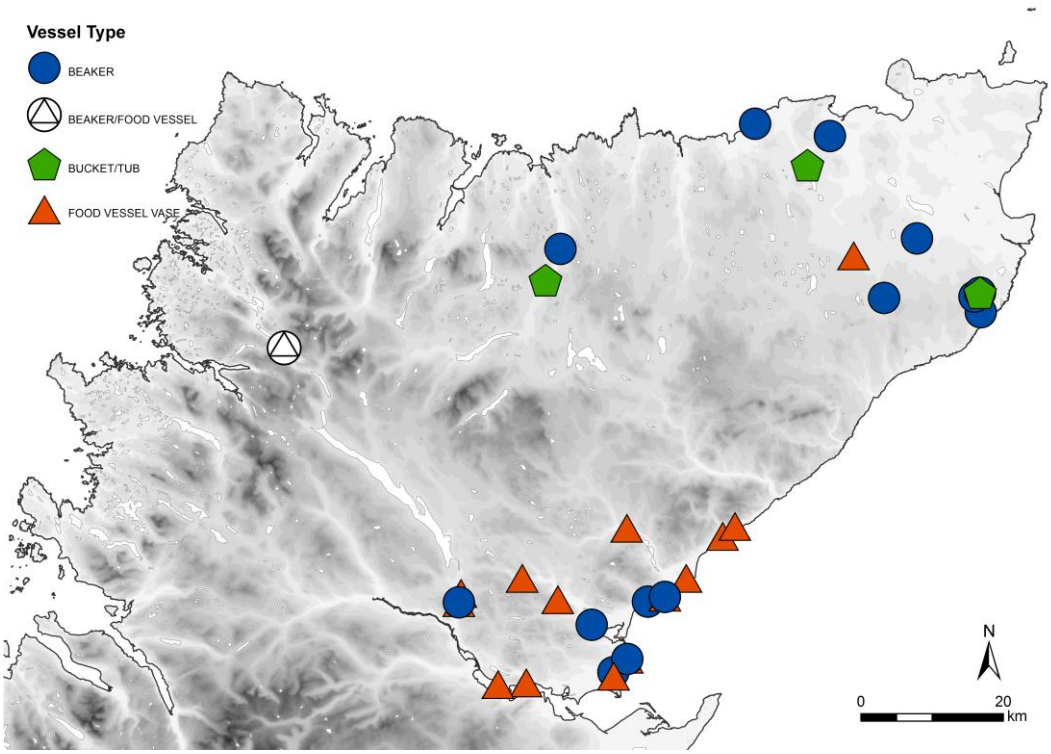

Figure 8.7: *Distribution of funerary finds by vessel type in the North Highlands. (see also Figs 8.8 & 8.9)*

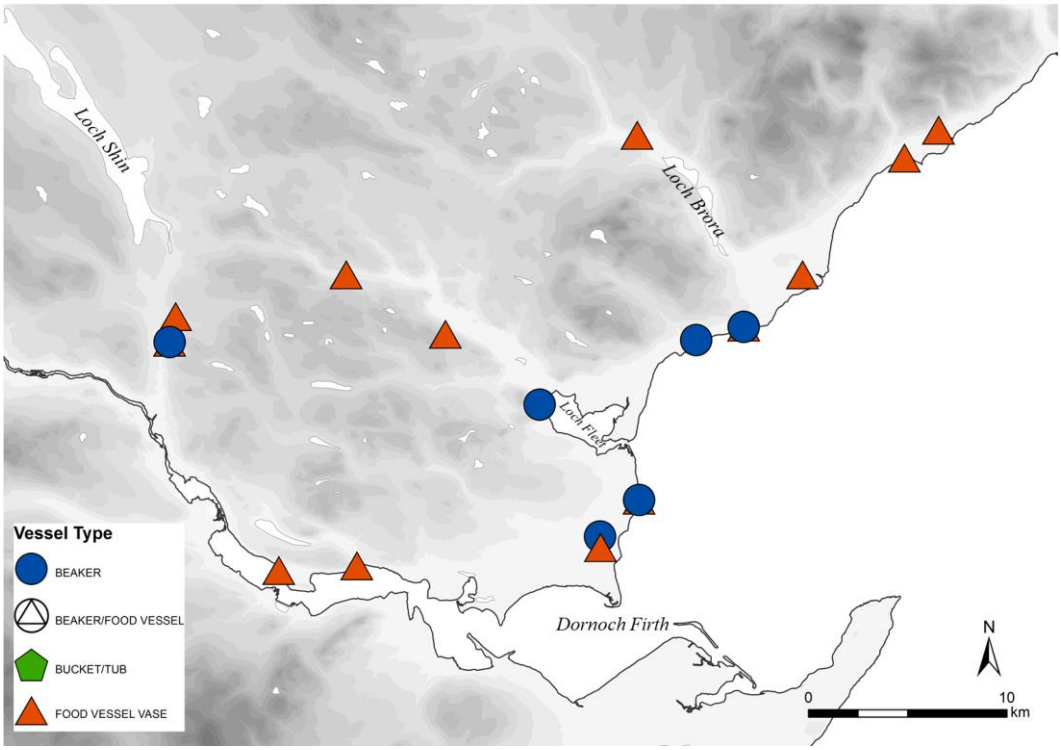

Figure 8.8: *Distribution of funerary finds by type in southeast Sutherland*

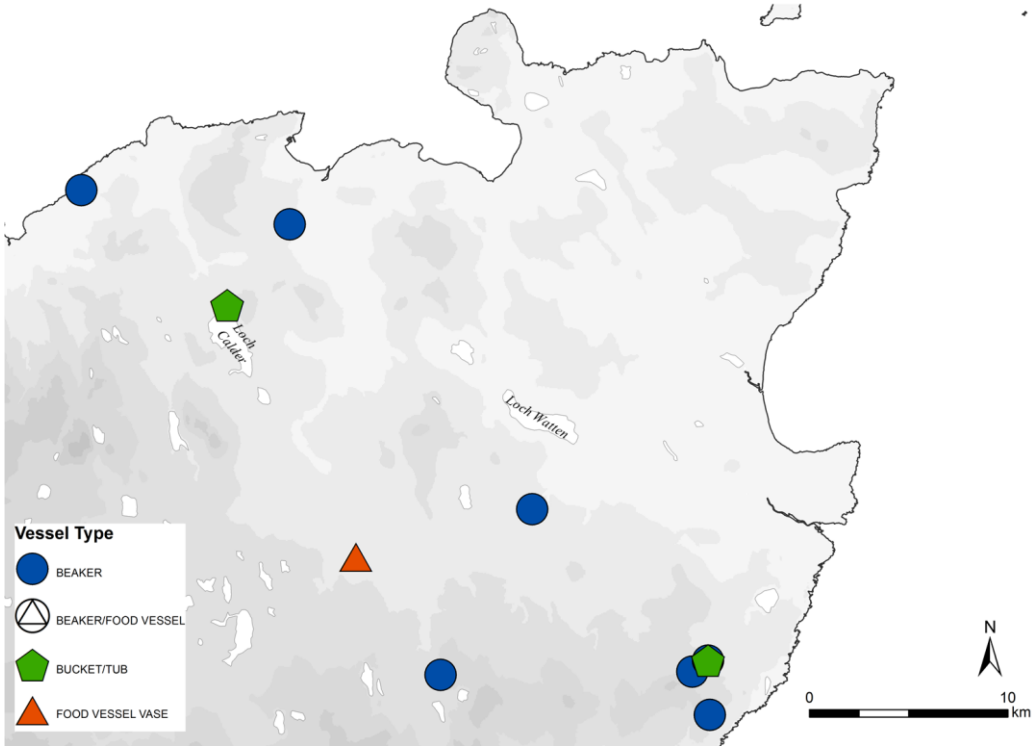

Figure 8.9: *Distribution of funerary finds by type in Caithness*

deposits may not have been a domestic vessel *sensu stricto* and could relate to the phase of activity that included the deposition of a single Food Vessel, V155, and a spatulate bone pin (*ibid.*). The domestic pottery in general covers a range of probable undecorated storage and cooking wares, but precise contexts and functions cannot, given the limited size of the assemblage, be stated.

8.3 Funerary finds

8.3.1 Nature of the evidence

Twenty-nine funerary contexts ranging from unobtrusive cists to cemeteries were recorded from the North Highlands (Fig. 8.7). These are distributed primarily along the River Fleet and the coast of the Dornoch Firth (Fig. 8.8). Along the Golspie coast heading northeast, lies a further cluster of funerary finds comprising Beakers and Food Vessels (Fig. 8.8). In Caithness there is a dispersed group of vessels in a roughly northwest/ southeast tangent centred on the Yarrows and Waten district (Fig. 8.9). Two further clusters appear as outliers to the main distribution, including the vessels from Chealamy (NH11) and Woody Knowe (NH31), and roughly to the southwest, Loch More (NH23). Six further sites were identified but owing to

lack of further information or uncertainties regarding provenance these were not examined in detail (*cf.* **App. D2**). These include the possible cremation enclosure at Killmister, Skitten (Duff-Dunbar 1935), the ambiguous finds from Greystones (P.S.A.S 1873) and the vessel from Bylbster (O.S.N.B 1871: 98). Sherds from the base of a probable Beaker were recorded from a cist at Sarsgrum, Durness (P.S.A.S 1962: 252).

Beakers form around 46% (*n.* 16) of the assemblage, with nine examples from Caithness and seven from Sutherland (Fig. 8.10). Food Vessels accounted for 40% of the finds, with 92% of these located in Sutherland (Fig. 8.10). Only one example was noted in Caithness from Sandhills, Dalmore (NH27), but a further shouldered vessel was found in a chambered cairn at Cnoc na Ciste (NH12), but it is unclear if this relates to funerary activity (**Section 8.4.5**). Three bucket/ tub vessels were recorded, two from Caithness, including a single vessel from the stone row at Battle Moss (NH7), and a third from Sutherland.

Cordoned Urns are known from the area including examples from Little Ferry and Lairg. The cylindrical vessel from Lairg was undecorated except for two pinched up cordons (Cowie, R. 2011: 151) (Fig. 8.41). The Lairg vessel is dated to 1420-1040 cal BC (Bradley 2011: 153) falling outside the timeframe of this study. The precise form of the vessel from the sand dunes at Little Ferry is unclear. The presence of Cordoned Urns at sand dune sites is not unusual, several examples were noted at Culbin Sands (Walker 1967: 97). No examples of Collared Urns were recorded, the vessel from Loth, previously assigned to this group, can instead be related to Food Vessel Urns (**Section 8.3.3**)

8.3.2 Beakers

In total, sixteen Beakers were identified, 43% were of indeterminate form (Fig. 8.11). The bulk of these were from Caithness and include the fragmentary vessels recovered from the cists at the stone rows of Garrywhin (NH19) and Battle Moss (NH7). Forms, where defined, comprised a limited range of short-necked, s-profiled and low-carinated vessels (Fig. 8.11).

Funerary Contexts

Beakers were predominantly recovered from unobtrusive cists. Covering mounds were rarely recorded, but several cists were set into natural mounds. Cists ranged from 0.46 to 1.28m^2, with lengths from 0.9-1.83m. There were no recorded examples of prepared floors at any of the cists. Cists were typically formed of four slabs, although the cist at Chealamy (NH11) was

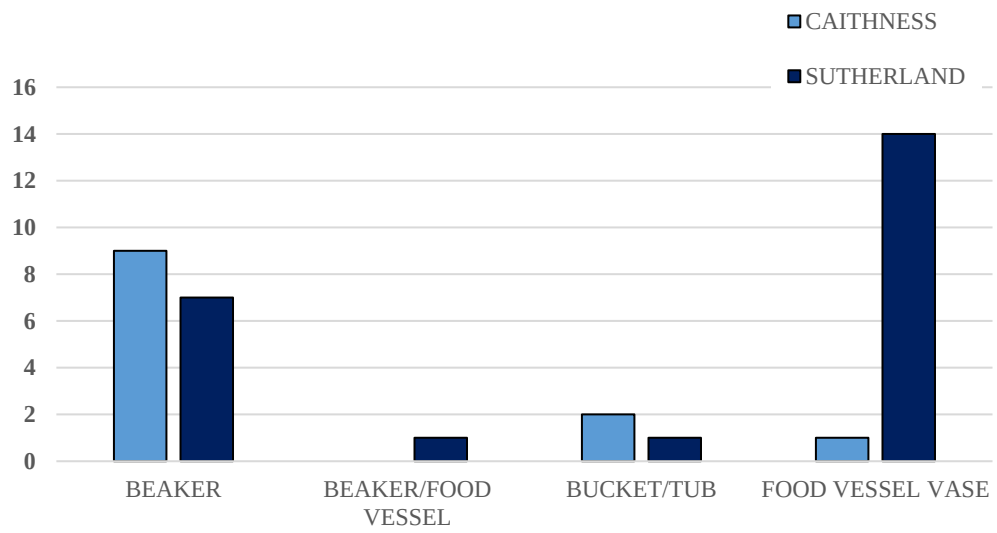

Figure 8.10: *Count of vessel types found in funerary contexts in the North Highlands*

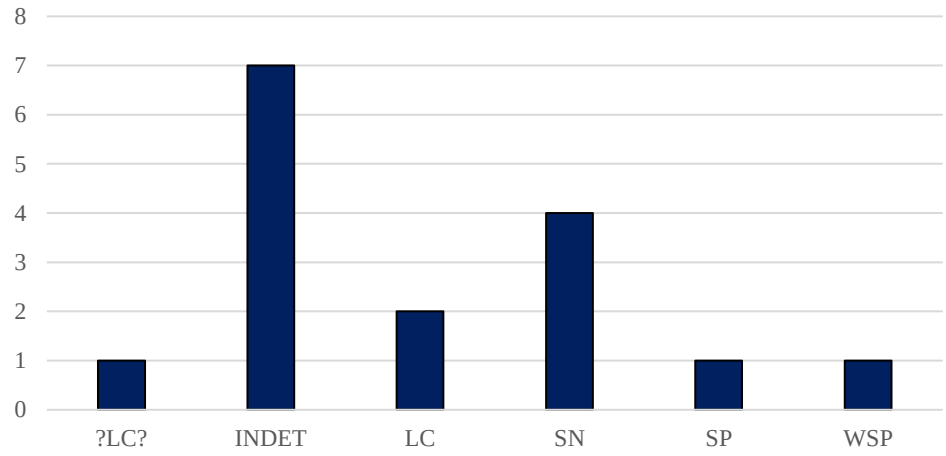

Figure 8.11: *Beaker forms recorded from funerary contexts in the North Highlands*

Key: ***?LC?.****probable low-carinated,* ***INDET.*** *Indeterminate form,* ***LC.*** *Low-carinated,* ***SN.*** *Short-necked,* ***SP.*** *S-profile* ***WSP.*** *Weak s-profile*

formed of eight slabs, giving it a roughly D-shaped appearance (Gourlay 1985b). Cists were primarily positioned on ridges overlooking rivers or lochs, or near the coast. At Keas Cottage (NH21) and Achavanich (NH4) cists were set into rock cut pits, rather than gravel or earth. The cists at Acharole (NH1) and Achavanich (NH4) were situated in dense landscapes comprising stone circles and chambered cairns. The cist at Acharole (NH1) may have been

marked by a standing stone (Heald & Barber 2015: 65) (Fig. 8.16)[7]. Close by the site lie the remains of a probable stone circle, and the cist at Achavanich (NH4) was situated north of a u-shaped stone setting (M. Hoole pers. comm.).

Four further vessels were recovered from the stone rows at Garrywhin (NH19) and Battle Moss (NH7). At Battle Moss (NH7) vessels were recovered from a series of putative cists sealed by a later cairn (Pannett 2005: 90). Deposits of pottery were found adjacent to a large upright that could have formed one side of a disturbed cist (Baines *et al.* 2003: 95). The cist at Garrywhin (NH19) could have been sealed by a cairn, but it is unclear if this is a ring cairn similar to Battle Moss (NH7) (Anderson 1886: 126-9). In three cases cists were set into chambered cairns, at Cnoc Na H'Uiseig (Lower Dounreay), Reay (NH13), Embo[8] (NH17) and South Yarrows (NH28). At Achinduich Burial Cairn 1 (NH3) the fragmentary vessel, V17, formed part of a wider setting of burials, comprising a series of cremations, including Food Vessels (Fig. 8.27). Like the finds from Battle Moss (NH7) these deposits were sealed by a later cairn. The heavily disturbed cists from Carn Liath (NH10) could have formed part of a small cemetery site, which included a second burial containing a probable Food Vessel (Love 1991: 157). At Chealamy (NH11) Gourlay noted "*one or two amorphous, shallow depressions*" (1985b: 571), suggesting further burials.

Morphology & Associations

Indeterminate

Indeterminate Beakers were recovered primarily from funerary contexts set into other monuments. These include sherds from South Yarrows (NH28) and EO360 from Lower Dounreay (NH13) associated with a secondary cist placed into the chamber (Edwards 1928: 141). The context in which these sherds was found was disturbed, and their association with the cist is tentative (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1991: 124). The male from the cist at Lower Dounreay (NH13) was laid on its back and covered with beach shingle (Edwards 1928: 142). At South Yarrows (NH28), roughly west of Battle Moss (NH7), a decorated sherd is recorded from the cist, which contained seventy small lignite beads, and a possible cremation (Henshall

*[7]The use of standing stones or posts to mark out graves is known from several other burials. The cist at Broomend of Crichie and Meldon Bridge may have been marked out by two substantial posts (Bradley 2011: 108, Illustration 3.14). Early burials with Beakers as at Upper Largie and Newmill were marked with timber posts (**Section 2.1**) (Fig. 2.4)*

[8] At Embo (NH17) the Beakers formed part of a broader episode of deposition in the later 3rd millennium (Henshall & Wallace 1965a). The nature of this activity included the deposition of multiple ceramic vessels, alongside a suite of other non-ceramic artefacts. The bulk of these finds appear to be associated with a sequence of burials, including inhumations and cremations.

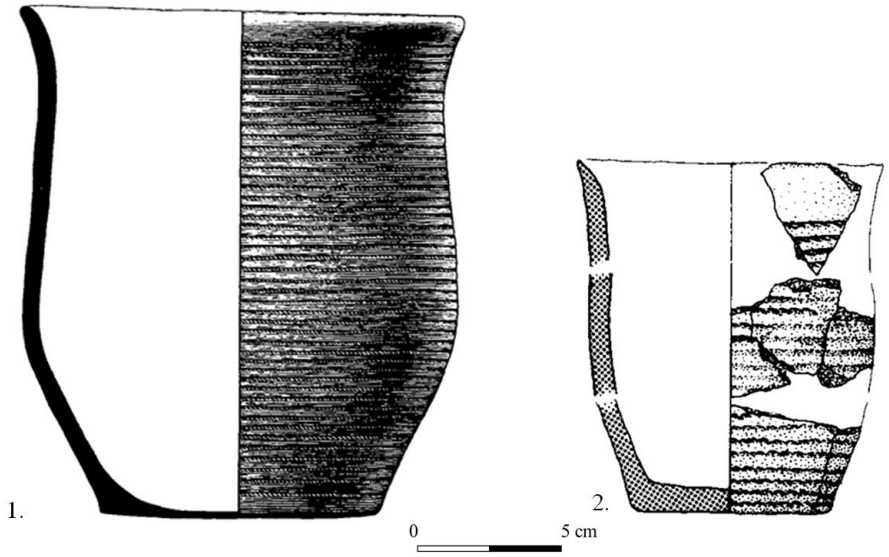

Figure 8.12: *Low carinated Beakers from the North Highlands found in funerary contexts:*

Key: ***1.*** *Dornoch Nursery (NH15), Sutherland (Ashmore 1989: Illus 6a),* ***2.*** *EQ633, Embo (NH17), Sutherland (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995 Figure 23)*

1963: 292). The sherd is not illustrated and now appears to be lost. Consequently, the definition of this vessel is uncertain. The Beaker sherds from Carn Liath (NH10) were found in Trench 1/Area A but lack further description (Love 1991: 165). Further fragmentary and undiagnostic sherds were recovered from the stone rows at Battle Moss (NH7) and Garrywhin (NH19). There is some confusion over the nature of the finds from Garrywhin (NH19), with Burl suggesting that the sherds could belong to a Food Vessel rather than a Beaker (1976: 160). The sherds are described as decorated with "*twisted thong*" (P.S.A.S. 1869: 503), and in 1915 as "*a bowl shaped urn*" (Gunn 1915: 348). The finds could not be located, and no illustration of the pottery is available.

At Battle Moss (NH7) the assemblage from the ring cairn comprised 350 sherds, representing around four pots (A. Sheridan pers. comm.). Three of these are Beakers, including two indeterminate examples. Pot 2 comprising *c.* 9 comb impressed sherds, in an abraded condition, could relate to the belly of a Beaker (A. Sheridan pers. comm.). Pot 3 was represented by only a single sherd from the lower belly of the vessel, whilst lacking diagnostic features it is suggested that the vessel based on fabric is comparable to the sinuous vessels, Pot 1 and 2 (A. Sheridan pers. comm.).

Low-carinated

Three examples of low-carinated Beakers were recorded from funerary contexts. Alongside the undiagnostic sherds from Battle Moss (NH7), fragments of a probable low-carinated Beaker were found (Pot 1). Pot 1 from Battle Moss (NH7) measured 205mm high with a rim diameter of 150mm. The vessel sports a sub-rim cordon and is decorated with a herringbone motif created through jabbed impressions (A. Sheridan pers. comm.). The vessel from Dornoch Nursery (NH15) is 175mm tall with a rim diameter of 136mm. The Dornoch Nursery (NH15) Beaker is decorated with all over (AO) cord decoration (Fig. 8.12). Sherds of a further low-carinated vessel were recovered from Embo (NH17), EQ633. Whilst found in Cist 2, it is possible that the sherds are redeposited from the cairn (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: 139). These deposits are discussed further in **Section 8.4.4**.

Osteological data is limited to the cremation and inhumation from Dornoch Nursery (NH15) (Ashmore 1989: 66). The remains were highly fragmentary, comprising only the skull. The cremation includes fragments of an infant. The position of the inhumation cannot be stated

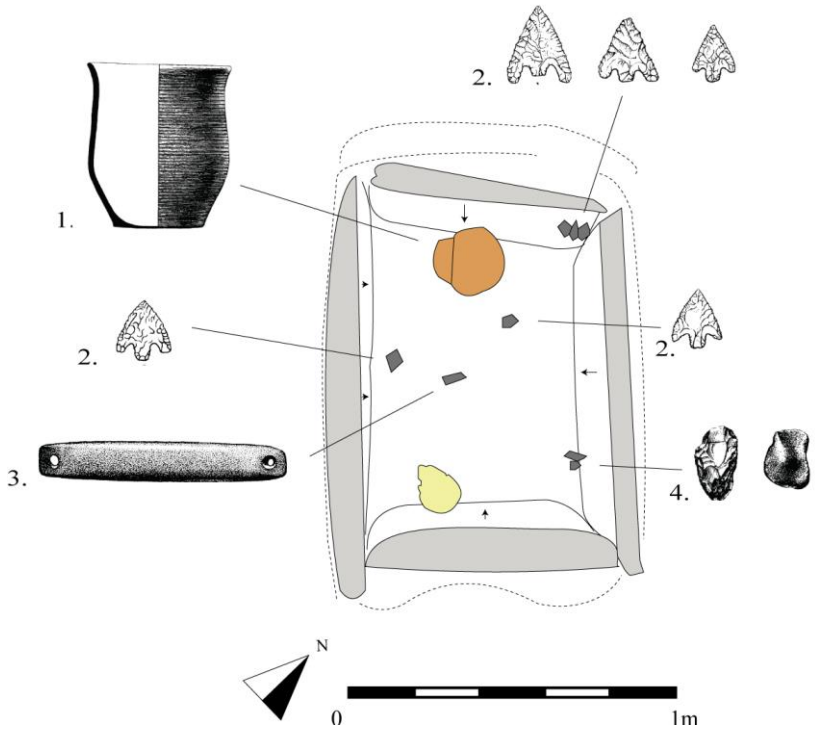

Figure 8.13: *Plan of Dornoch Nursery (NH15), Sutherland, layout and artefacts recovered (after Ashmore 1989):*

Key: ***1.*** *Low-carinated Beaker* ***2.*** *Flint arrowheads* ***3.*** *Bracer* ***4.*** *Flint strike a light*

n.b. artefacts not to scale

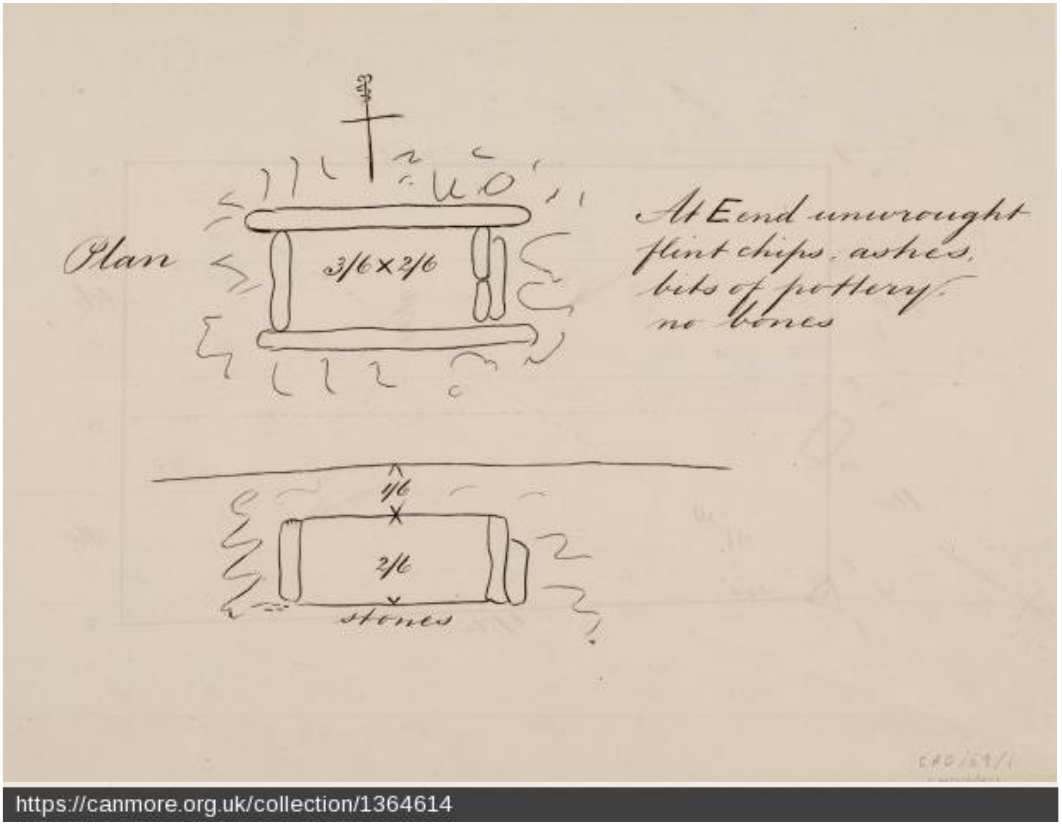

Figure 8.14: *Drydens sketch of the cist at Garrywhin (NH19), Caithness (© RCAHMS)*

with confidence owing to disturbance but appears to be orientated southwest/\northeast (*ibid.*) (Fig. 8.13). The vessel was found at the northeast end of the cist, if related to the inhumation this implies a position by the feet. It is unclear to which burial the artefacts relate. One possibility is that the remains were deposited together (*ibid*). Alternatively, the presence of the cremation at Dornoch Nursery (NH15) could belong to the tradition of earlier 3rd millennium cremations, possibly linked to the single sherd of Grooved Ware found in the cist fill. Other examples of cremation with Beakers are rare, with two further examples in Scotland and Northeast England (Gibson, C. & Cleary; see also Clarke, D.L. 1970: 453)[9]. This total excludes several other examples, including Dornoch Nursery (NH15), and further examples identified during this project. The vessel from Glengolly (NH20) could have been associated with charcoal and burnt bones, but these could belong to an earlier discovery of a cinerary urn and cremation in 1866 (Anderson 1866: 253; OS 1872) (**App. D3**). At Garrywhin (NH19), Drydens survey drawings imply that, rather than an inhumation the burial was a cremation, as no bones are noted, but ashes are recorded from the east end (Fig. 8.14).

[9] *Data from A.E.M.A database, the database is currently in its beta stage and this number is not necessarily complete. Available at http://www.aemap.ac.uk/en/*

1.

2.

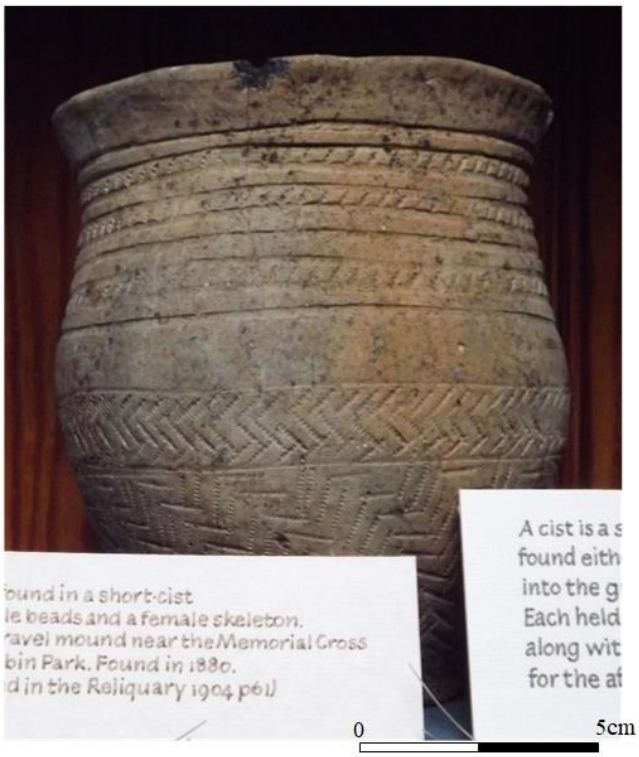

Figure 8.15: *S-profile Beakers recovered from funerary contexts in the North Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *Cambusmore (NH9), Sutherland (Author © Inverness Museum & Art Gallery)*
2. *Dunrobin Park (NH16), Sutherland (Author © Dunrobin Museum)*

In addition to the low-carinated Beaker the Dornoch Nursery (NH15) burial was accompanied by a suite of artefacts. As noted earlier, whether these are associated with the cremation or the inhumation is unclear. The other finds include a stone bracer, five barbed and tanged arrowheads and flint strike-a-light (Ashmore 1989: 70) (Fig. 8.13). Flint strike-a-lights are recorded from several other sites within the study area, including Corran Ferry (SH16) and Culduthel Mains (SH18) (*cf.* Teather & Chamberlain 2016 for a recent review) (**App. H3**). The bracer is made of local Devonian sediments or Irish jasper (Ixer *et al.* 2011: 31, 42). The combination of these artefacts is like other 'archery packages' from across Britain (**Section 2.2**). Owing to disturbance, caution should be expressed in viewing the package as a cohesive whole. Elements of the assemblage could have alternatively been associated with the inhumation and cremation (Ashmore 1989: 70).

S-profile

Two s-profile Beakers were recovered from unobtrusive cists, including a single weak s-profile vessel. The Dunrobin Park (NH16) Beaker, *c.* 178mm tall, was found in association with a female young adult. The vessel has a sinuous profile with no obvious distinction

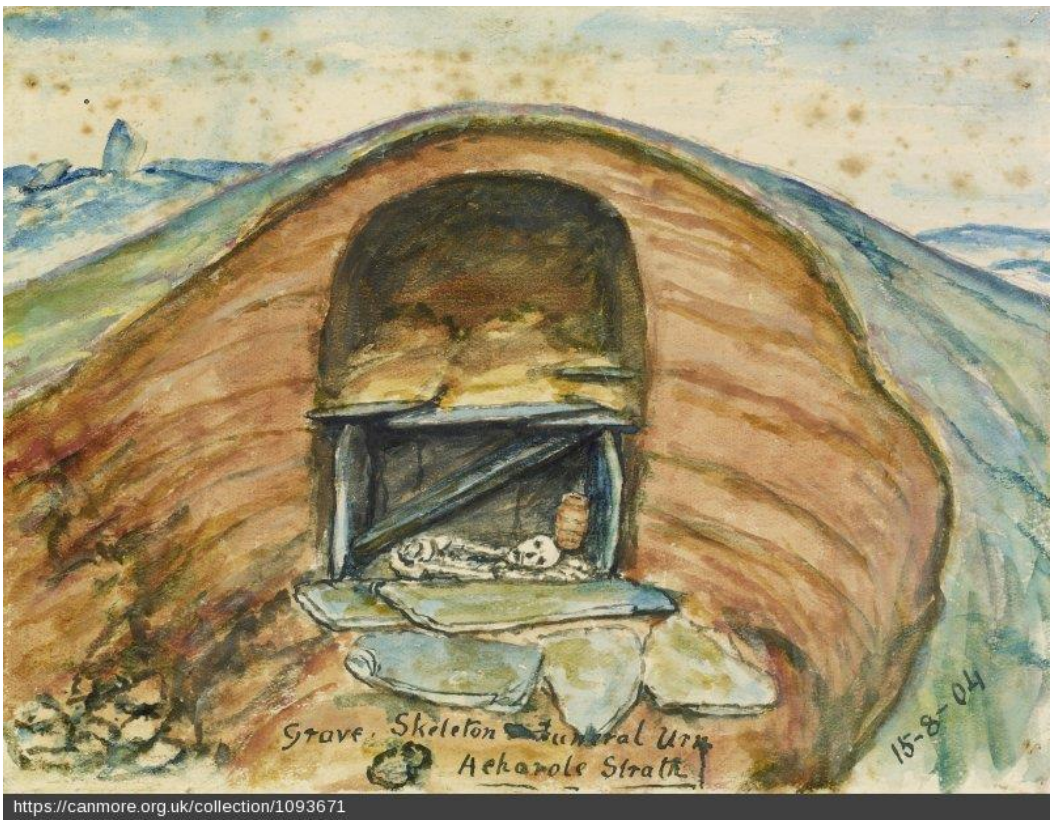

Figure 8.16: *Watercolour illustration by John Nicolson of the burial at Acharole (NH1), Caithness (© R.C.A.H.M.S)*

between the neck and the body (Fig. 8.15.2). The exterior is decorated in two broad zones, the upper comprising bands of horizontal incisions, alternately infilled with diagonal incisions. The lower zone is filled with comb impressed z-shapes, which extend to the base of the vessel (Fig. 8.15). In addition, the burial contained 118 shale beads, 18 quartz pebbles and three flints (Joass 1904: 61). The necklace was incomplete and could have formed a token deposit (Sheridan *et al.* 1998: 125). The beads were placed at the heels with the pebbles and the three flints were found near the breast (Joass 1885: 61). Originally the flints could have been placed in an organic bag. The use of bags or wrappings has been suggested at several other cist sites, including the Amesbury Archer (Fitzpatrick 2002: 630; see also Brück 2004a: 318-9). The Beaker itself was recorded as being placed behind the head (Joass 1885: 61).

The weak s-profile Beaker from Cambusmore (NH9) is around 135mm tall, with a rim diameter of 112mm. The vessel lacks a strong s-profile, the rim is simple and rounded with a slight internal bevel. The vessel is decorated with a series of horizontal incisions, with a narrow band of vertical incision around the belly. The lower half is fringed with short diagonal incisions (Fig. 8.15.1). No further finds or osteological data is recorded in association with the vessel.

Short-necked

Short-necked Beakers form 25% of the assemblage, with four recorded examples, predominantly located in Caithness. Vessels, where the sex and age of the individual was known, were associated with male adults (*n.*2), with a single female burial. The female young adult from Achavanich (NH4) was tightly flexed, suggesting the body was bound (M. Hoole pers. comm.). The use of binding is noted from other sites, including the cist at Langwell Farm where the body was mummified (Lelong 2014). The posture of the male inhumation at Chealmay (NH11) is not recorded, but only the pelvic and leg bones were recovered. It appears that this was all that was interred (Harman 1985: 571). Comparable examples have been noted from other cists in Britain. These include the dagger grave at Newborough, Northumberland, where the lower half of the body had been rearranged to form a crouched inhumation (Newman & Miket 1973). The Acharole (NH1) burial was crouched with the vessel placed either in front or behind the head (Fig. 8.16)[10]. At Achavanich (NH4) the vessel was placed behind the head (M. Hoole pers. comm.).

[10] *Abercromby illustrated a sherd of a second vessel alongside the aforementioned vessel (1912: Fig 283). The excavation report does not state a second vessel was found, so where this vessel derives from is unclear (cf. Mitchell 1934: 172).*

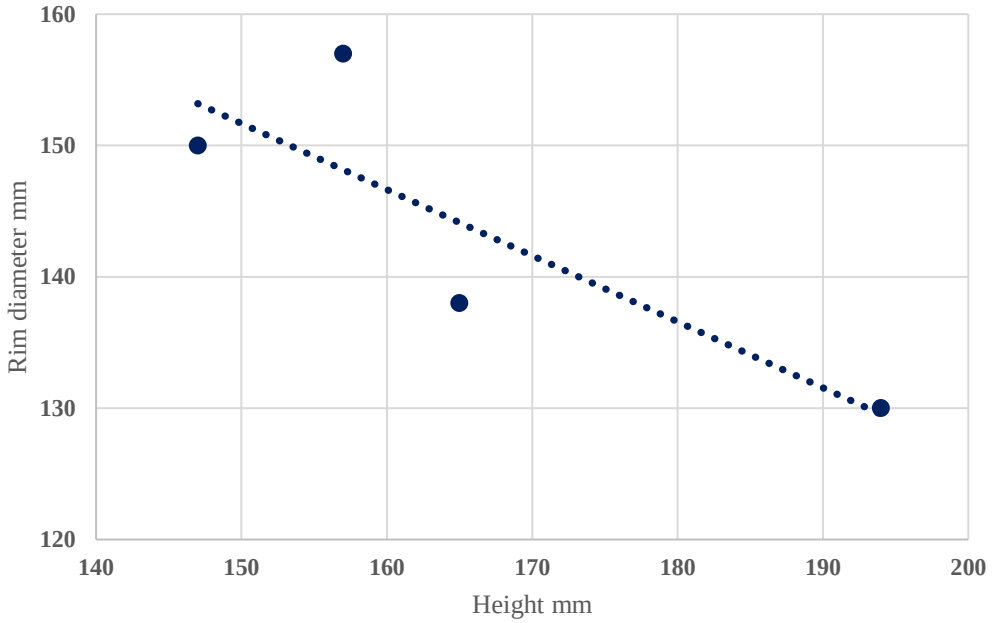

Figure 8.17: *Height vs. rim diameter of short-necked Beakers from funerary contexts in the North Highlands*

Vessel heights ranged from 147-194 mm. Taller vessels tended to have narrow rim diameters, with shorter versions having more squat proportions (Fig. 8.17). The Chealamy (NH11) vessel sports a pronounced belly with a slight carination. The neck is well defined ending in a rounded rim (Fig. 8.18.2). The vessel from Glengolly (NH20) is narrower with a slight carination at the midpoint with a well-defined rim (Fig. 8.18.3). The taller Acharole (NH1) vessel has a slightly elongate profile, with a short well-defined neck. The rim is slightly everted and bevelled, but the neck is weakly out turned (Fig. 8.18.4). Recent analysis of the Achavanich (NH4) Beaker suggests that the neck is slightly cupped and that the carination of the vessel is less marked. Several different combs were employed in the decoration of the vessel (M. Hoole pers. comm.). The decoration consists of two broad zones formed from multiple outlined triangles, truncated by the horizontal borders. The effect creates a motif reminiscent of leather cross binding (Clarke, D.L. 1970: 18) (Fig. 8.18.1). It is possible that the Achavanich (NH4) Beaker motifs reference patterns found on organic vessels, with the distinct banding and hatching pattern imitating basketry. The use of the motif in two broad bands separated by horizontal bands lack direct parallel within the study area, but a single band is noted on EO1052 from Kilcoy South (SH34) (Fig. 9.53). A close parallel for the Beaker was recorded from Darnaway in association with a female inhumation (Wederburn 1977). Similar motifs are recorded on Irish bowls (*e.g.* Ó Ríordáin & Waddell 1993: no. 62).

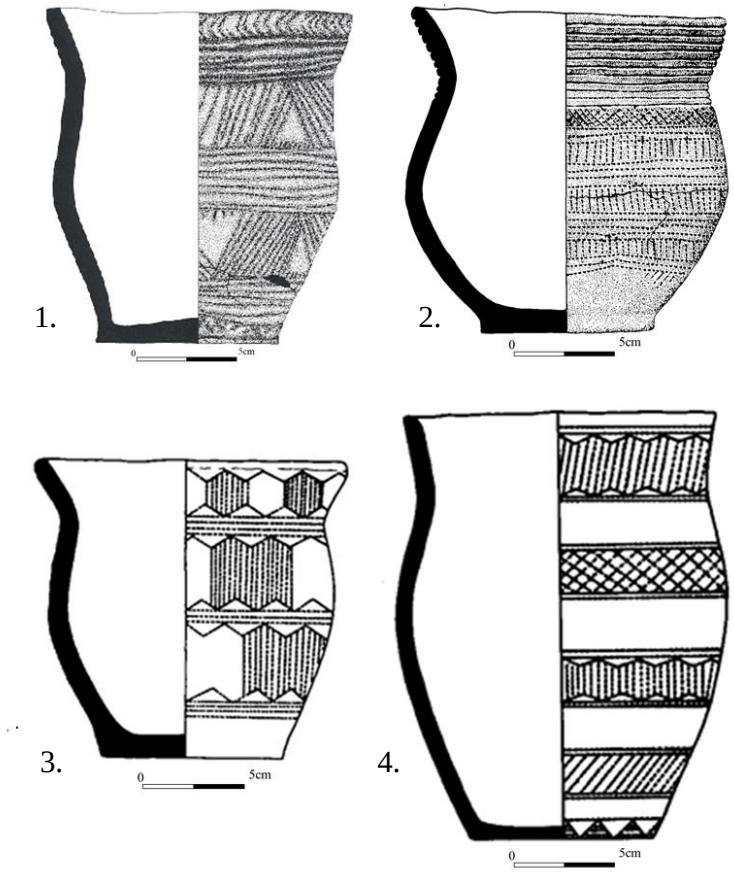

Figure 8.18: *Short-necked vessels from funerary contexts in North Highlands:*

Squat (rim diameters > or = vessel height)

Key: ***1.*** *Achavanich (NH4), Caithness (H.E.R),* ***2.*** *Chealamy (NH11), Sutherland (Gourlay 1984 Illus 2),* ***3.*** *Glengolly (Clarke, D.L. 1970: no. 731), Caithness*

Tall (rim diameters < than height)

4. *Acharole (NH1), Caithness (Clarke, D.L. 1970: no. 656)*

At Chealamy (NH11) the neck of the vessel is decorated with multiple horizontal incisions, with a band of criss-cross incisions below (Fig. 8.18.2). In contrast the vessel from Acharole (NH1) is taller and narrower, decorated in five bands. The neck is decorated with infilled hexagons created through comb impression, bordered above and below with two horizontal lines of comb impressions. The belly is decorated with a single band of incised lattice and a zone of infilled chevrons. Near the base is a further band of diagonal lines and at the very bottom a series of diagonal lines forming triangles (Fig. 8.19.4).

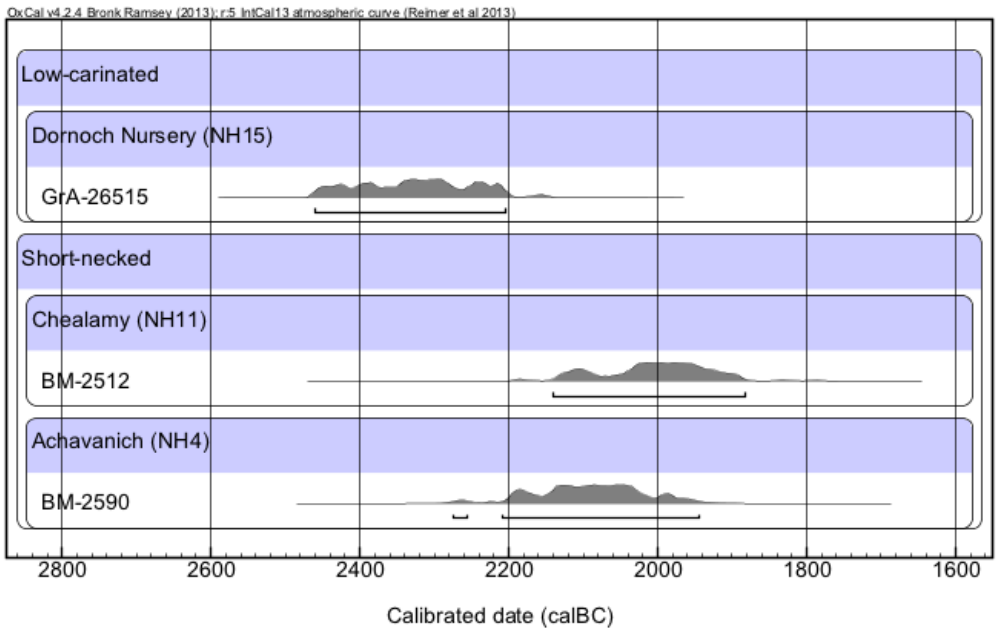

Figure 8.19: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for Beakers found in funerary contexts in the North Highlands (**App. F3** for details)*

Chronology

Radiocarbon dates are limited to three sites, Dornoch Nursery (NH15), Achavanich (NH4) and Chealamy (NH11). The single date from Dornoch Nursery (NH15), is based on the cremated remains, but the date 2470-2200 cal BC (GrA-26515) (**App. F3**) (Fig. 8.19), is consistent with the general date range of low-carinated Beakers from across Britain (Needham 2005, Healy 2012) (see **Section 2.2**). The low-carinated Beaker from Battle Moss (NH7) lacks a date but stylistically fits into a similar time range (A. Sheridan pers. comm.). The Beakers from Battle Moss (NH7) likely predate the cremation and bucket/ tub vessel, providing a *terminus ante quem* of 1650-1440 cal BC (GrA-26540) (**App. F3**). EQ633 from Embo (NH17) could be of an early date but dating of the site is complicated by the poor stratigraphy of the finds (**Section 8.4.4**). Both the Chealamy (NH11) and Achavanich (NH14) Beakers lie late in the sequence. The Achavanich (NH4) Beaker dates from 2250-1940 cal BC (BM-2590) (**App. F3**), and the Chealamy (NH11) Beaker to 2150-1880 cal BC (BM-2512) (**App. F3**). The association of the Dunrobin Park (NH16) Beaker with lignite beads from a disc bead necklace suggest a late date post 2200 BC (Sheridan & Davis 2002: 816; see also Woodward & Hunter, J. 2015: Table 9.4). The lignite beads from South Yarrows (NH28) likely fall within a similar date range (**App. H3**).

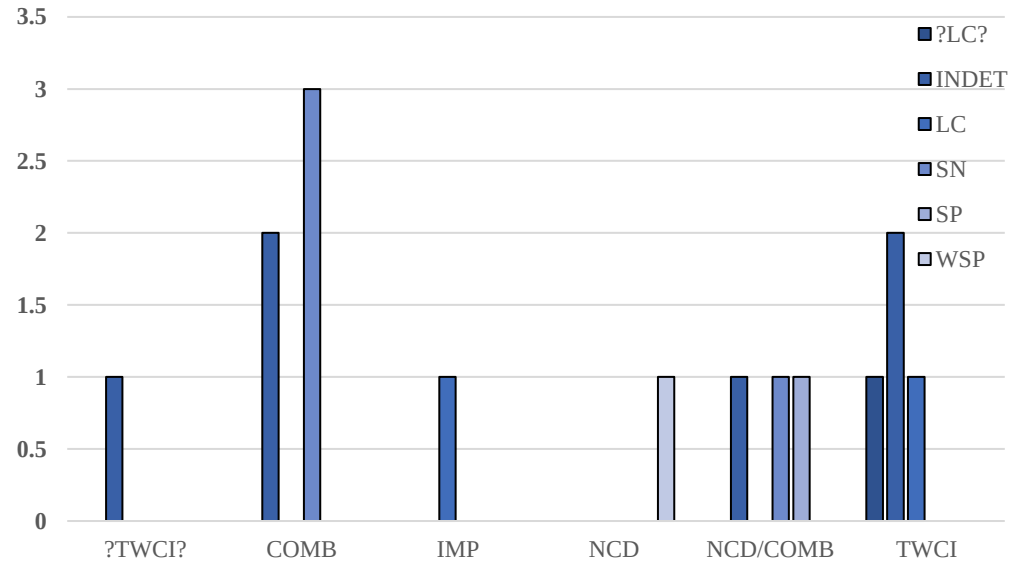

Figure 8.20: *Decorative techniques recorded on Beakers from funerary contexts in the North Highlands*

Key: ***?LC?.*** *Probable low-carinated form,* ***INDET.*** *Indeterminate form,* ***LC.*** *Low-carinated,* ***SN.*** *Short-necked,* ***SP.*** *S-profile,* ***WSP.*** *Weak s-profile*

?TWCI?. *Probable twisted cord* ***COMB.*** *Comb impressed* ***NCD.*** *Incised* ***NCD/ COMB.*** *Incision and comb impressions* ***TWCI.*** *Twisted cord*

In summary, whilst there is evidence of an early phase of low-carinated Beakers, there is a potential disparity between these and later Beaker types. Gaps in dating pose an obstacle in understanding whether this is a historical gap, or a facet of the incomplete data. Where early vessels were noted, these formed the focus of later deposition, as at Embo (NH17) and Battle Moss (NH7), but the chronological relationships between these various deposits is unclear. These questions will be further examined in **Chapter 11**.

Summary

Beakers are a mixed group but exhibit a degree of consistency with a preference for short-necked forms. 50% of the vessels were decorated with comb impressions. In three cases, this was combined with incision, at Chealamy (NH11), Dunrobin Park (NH16) and V17 from Achinduich Burial Cairn 1 (NH3) (Fig. 8.20). On the whole vessels were decorated using one technique rather than multiple (Fig. 8.20). Decoration on the remaining vessels was commonly

	?LC?	INDET	LC	SN	SP	Total
FEMALE				1	1	2
Young Adult				1	1	2
INDET	1					1
Subadult	1					1
MALE		1	1	2		4
Adult				1		1
Mid-adult				1		1
Young Adult		1	1			2

Table 8.3: *Age and sex data by Beaker form from funerary contexts in the North Highlands*

Key: ***?LC?:*** *Probable low-carinated form,* ***INDET:*** *Indeterminate form,* ***LC:*** *Low-carinated,* ***SN:*** *Short-necked,* ***SP:*** *S-profile,* ***WSP:*** *Weak s-profile*

divided into three zones[11] employing on average three motifs. Short-necked vessels showed the greatest diversity in motifs, but this could be biased by the sample size, with four short-necked vessels represented, compared to only two s-profile vessels. Differences in decoration could not be related to aspects of age and sex. The presence of similar decoration on the Darnaway vessel and Achavanich (NH4), both with female inhumations, is one possible exception to this. At Cambusmore (NH9), Chealamy (NH11) and Dunrobin Park (NH16) the necks were decorated with horizontal incisions or impressions, but again this is not unique to a particular form. Overall there is not a strong relationship between decoration and vessel type in the area.

Overall, Beakers are not deployed in strongly articulated assemblages, with no clear patterning (Table 8.3). At present the evidence is insufficient to support the notion that the selection of forms was related to the sex or age of the individual. Where patterns could be discerned, females tended to have vessels placed behind the head, with bodies orientated northwest and southwest[12]. In addition to a Beaker, burials were commonly associated with flint artefacts. Flint tools formed the most common find ranging from worked flakes to scrapers, being noted in three cases at Dunrobin Park (NH16), Achavanich (NH4) and Garrywhin (NH19). Of the four male burials, evenly split into adults and young adults, the position of the vessel was not stated, but bodies showed a preference for northeast/ southwest alignments. Only at Dornoch

[11] *In eight cases it was not possible to determine the number of zones due to fragmentation or the nature of the decoration.*
[12] *Data on orientation was only recorded in two cases, Achavanich (NH4) and Dunrobin Park (NH16)*

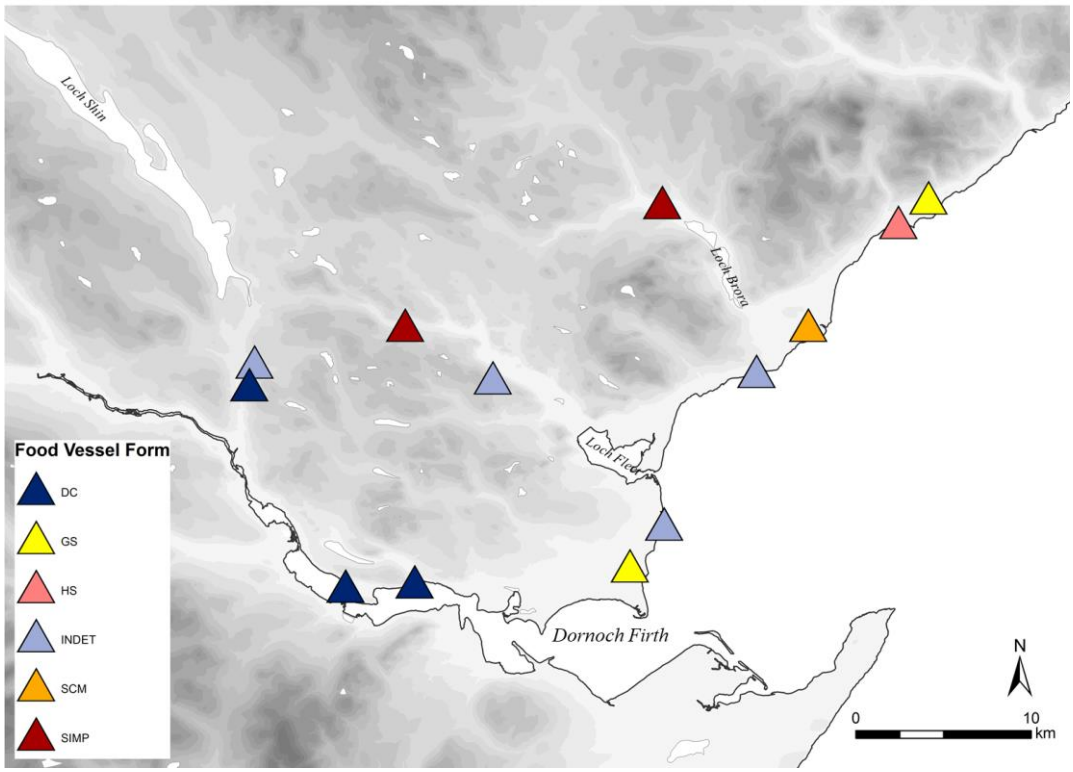

Figure 8.21: *Distribution of Food Vessel Vases in funerary contexts in South East Sutherland*

Key: ***DC.*** *Double cavetto,* ***GS.*** *Grooved Shoulder* ***HS.*** *High-shouldered* ***INDET.*** *Indeterminate form* ***SIMP.*** *Simple,* ***SCM.*** *Single mid-cavetto*

Nursery (NH15) were additional grave goods found in association with a male inhumation. The grave goods from Dornoch Nursery (NH15) find parallels in other regions of Britain, forming part of a limited group of archery burials (**Section 2.2**). The wider links of this material are discussed in **Chapter 11**.

8.3.3 Food Vessel Vases

Sixteen Food Vessel vases were recorded, accounting for 45% of the total funerary finds. There is a noticeable spread of vessels extending from the Dornoch Firth to Glen Loth (Fig. 8.21). Two vessels were found inland from this broadly coastal distribution at the site of Alt na Fearna (NH5). A single Food Vessel, V155, was recovered from the cremations under House 2, and a further vessel was recorded from Achinduich Burial Cairn 1 (NH3). In Caithness a single vessel was recovered from Sandhills, Dalmore (NH27). In addition, three further vessels were identified including a decorated tripartite vessel from Kishorn (Fig. 8.22) and Loch Loy (C. McCullagh pers. comm.). A large Food Vessel was recorded from Kilmote, Loth but its exact context is unknown (Fig. 8.23) (see **App. D2**). The vessel has previously

Figure 8.22: *Food Vessel from Kishorn (© I.M.A.G) (not to scale)*

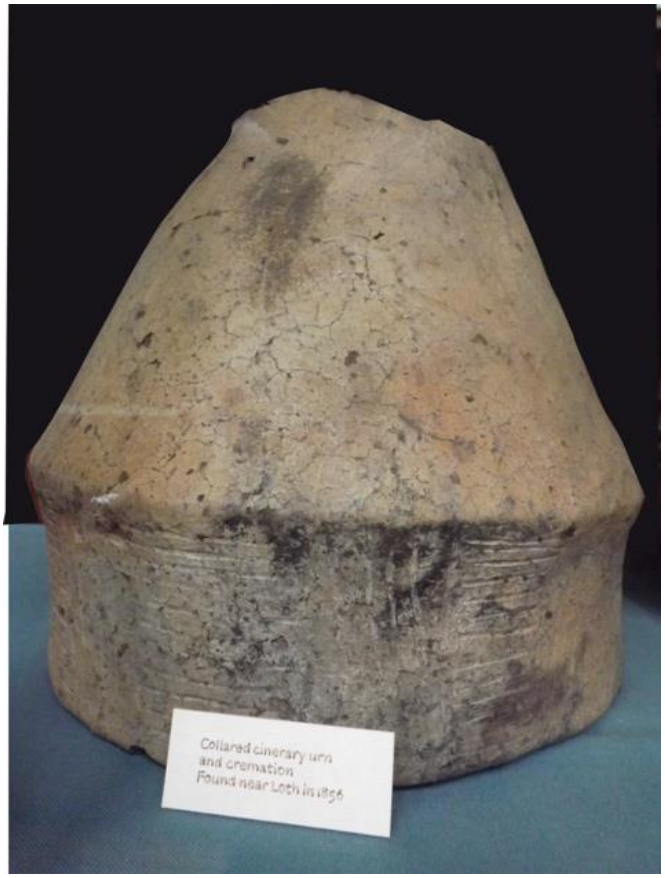

Figure 8.23 *Large Food Vessel from Loth, Sutherland (uncertian provenance (see* ***App. D3*** *for details)(Author © Dunrobin Museum) (not to scale)*

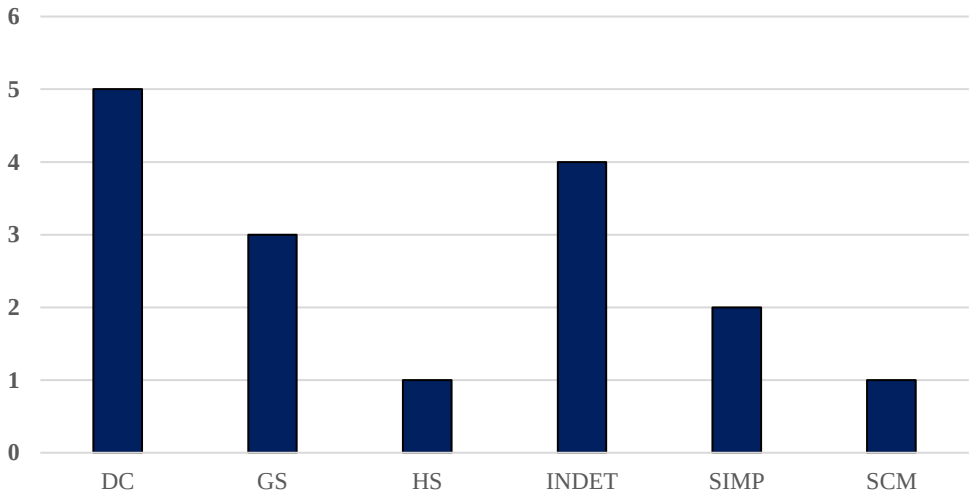

Figure 8.24: *Depositional contexts of Food Vessel vases found in funerary settings in the North Highlands (see **App. H2** for definitions)*

Key: ***DC.*** *Double cavetto,* ***GS.*** *Grooved Shoulder* ***HS.*** *High-shouldered* ***INDET.*** *Indeterminate form* ***SIMP.*** *Simple,* ***SCM.*** *Single mid-cavetto*

Figure 8.25: *Mound and cists at Crackaig (NH14), Sutherland (Daniel 1821: 410)*

been described as a Collared Urn by Longworth, being assigned to his Secondary Series (1984: 300). The vessel sports a wide shallow concave zone, decorated with a series of incisions. Unlike other examples of Collared Urns, the vessel lacks a strongly defined collar. The form closely resembles those found in Burgess' 'Basic Form' Food Vessels, and examples of Food Vessel Urns, including Dalmore (SH19) and a vessel from Glen Cloy, Arran (Cowie, T. 1978; 118). In his examination of Food Vessels and Collared Urn relationships, Wilkin noted that aspects of Longworth's secondary traits could occur on Food Vessels (2013: 192). This

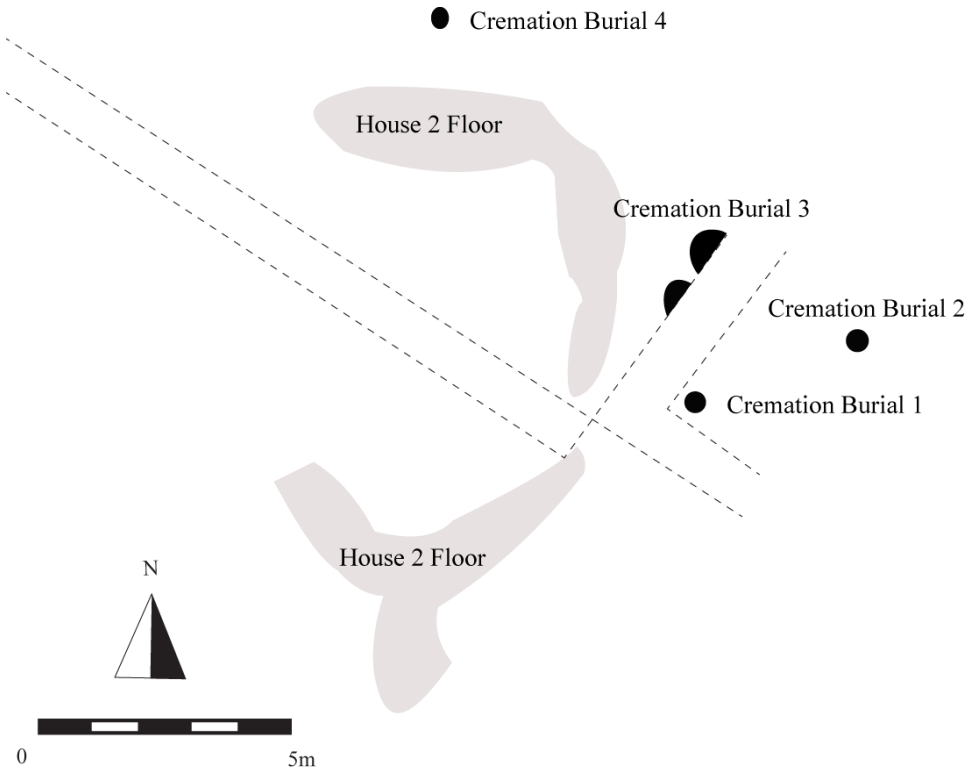

Figure 8.26: *Cremation burials and associated pits under House 2, Alt Na Fearna (NH5), Sutherland (after McCullagh & Tipping 1998: Figure 71)*

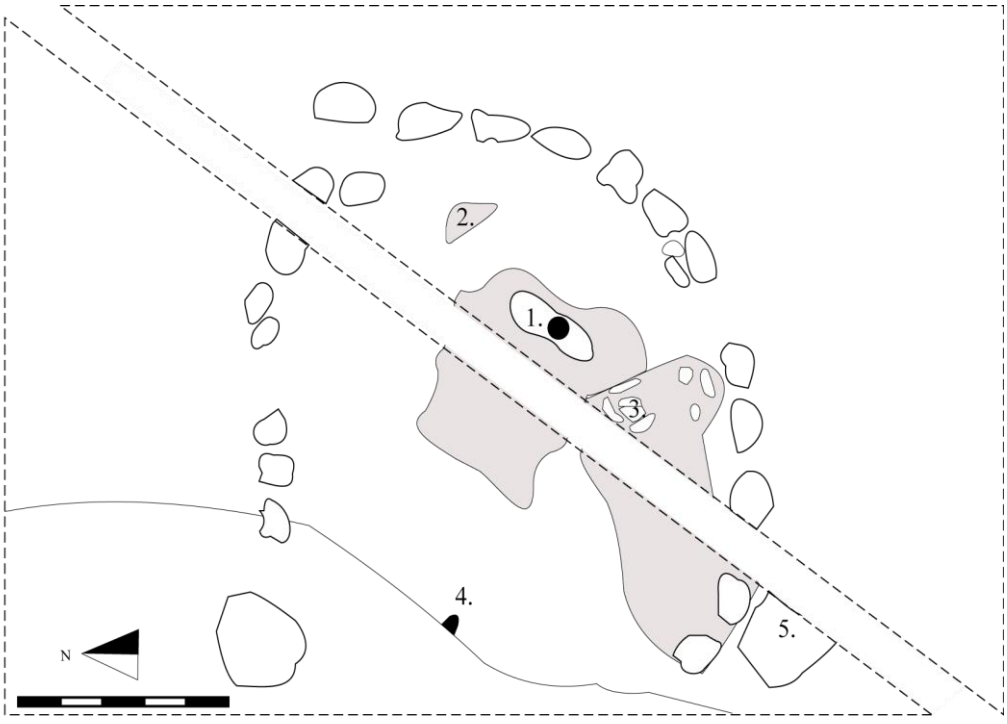

Figure 8.27: *Achinduich Burial Cairn 1 (NH3), Sutherland (after McCullagh & Tipping 1998: Figure 69)*

Key: ***1.*** *Food Vessel (V155) & shale beads,* ***2.*** *Soil spread with burnt bone,* ***3.*** *Cremation burial* ***5, 4.*** *Cremation burial* ***6, 5.*** *?fallen orthostat?*

Figure 8.28: *The putative cist at Carn Liath (NH10), Sutherland, the later broch wall is to the right (Love 1991: Plate 7)*

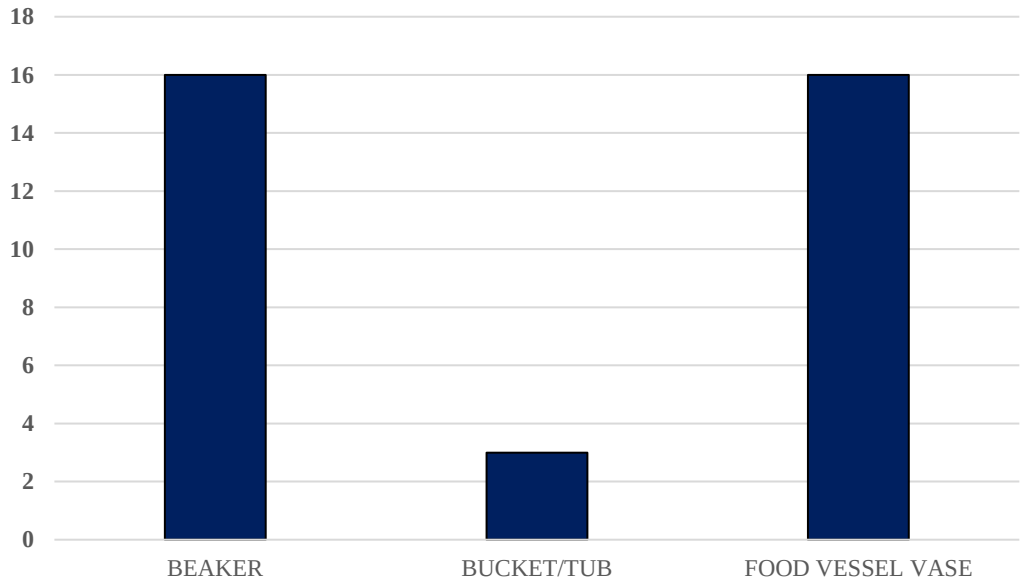

Figure 8.29: *Food Vessel forms recorded from funerary contexts in the North Highlands:*

Key: ***DC.*** *Double-cavetto,* ***GS.*** *Grooved-shoulder,* ***HS.*** *High-shouldered,* ***SIMP.*** *Simple* ***SCM.*** *Single cavetto middle,* ***INDET.*** *Indeterminate*

includes the distinct hurdle motif, suggesting that in some regions the typological boundary between Food Vessels and Collared Urns was fluid. The association of these vessels with cremations suggest they were both categorised same way.

Funerary Contexts

19% of the Food Vessel vases were recorded from cemetery sites, with a further 31% from unobtrusive cists (Fig. 8.24). Cist 1 at Sandhill (NH27) was one of four cists sited along a ridge (MacCallum 1962: 24), but little further detail is available. At Achinchanter (NH2) a pair of cists were found during ploughing; the first was empty whilst the second contained a single vessel along with a fragment of bronze and an arrowhead (Davidson, J.M. 1940: 15). From the cairn[13] at Crackaig (NH14) a pair of cists were uncovered, one contained a single grooved Food Vessel (Daniel 1821) (Fig. 8.25). Daniels account is unclear regarding the burial, but he notes the presence of 'staining' on the interior of the vessel possibly relating to the vessel contents (*ibid*.). The burial at Carn Liath (NH10) could have, owing to its proximity to a possible burial with a probable Beaker, formed part of a cemetery site (Love 1991: 165) (Fig. 8.28). The cist appears to have been enclosed by a circular stake feature (*ibid*.). The Alt Na Fearna (NH5) cremations formed a small cemetery or focus for ritual activity within the landscape (McCullagh 1998: 95) (Fig. 8.26). Sealed by Burial Cairn 1 at Achinduich (NH3) were several further cremation deposits and a probable cist (Fig. 8.27). The chambered cairn at Embo (NH17), akin to the Ord North (NH26), became a focus for burial activity during the later 3rd millennium, with multiple cremations and inhumations inserted into the chamber. At Brora (NH8) the presence of other cists is noted, suggesting that the single vessel recovered in 1902 could be part of a larger cemetery (Serjeantson 1911: 317). Precise details of the cists were lacking, but the cist at Carn Liath (NH10) could have had a pebble floor (Love 1991: 165) (Fig. 8.28). The bulk of the cists were cited in locations near the coast or overlooking rivers overlapping with the distribution of cists containing Beakers. The cist at Keas Cottage (NH21), measured 0.46 x 0.96m (Arabaolaza 2013: 7) (Fig. 8.35). The cist at Muie (NH25) was orientated northwest/ southeast, with an internal area of 0.96m^2.

Morphology & Associations

Five nodal forms were represented (Fig. 8.29), with a bias towards Sutherland (Fig. 8.21). Double-cavetto vessels accounted for 31% (*n*.6) of the assemblage centred between the

[13] *CANMORE suggests that this cairn is a natural glacial knoll, rather than a man-made feature.*

Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet. Grooved-shoulder vessels formed 19% (*n.3*) of the group, with a more dispersed distribution extending from Dornoch to Sandhill in Caithness. Other forms were rare with only one example of a high-shouldered vessel from Lothbeg (NH24) (Fig. 8.23). A single cavetto vessel was recorded from Brora (NH8), whilst simple forms were recorded from Ascoilemore (NH6) and Muie (NH25).

Indeterminate

Four indeterminate vessels were documented from the study area (Fig. 8.30). The fragment from Strath Fleet (NH29) could belong to a double-cavetto vessel, with a narrow zone defined by two raised ridges and a further shallow zone below the rim (Fig. 8.30.3). The rim is deeply bevelled and in cross section similar to V155, Achinduich (NH3) (Fig. 8.34.1). The vessel from Cremation Burial 3, Alt Na Fearna (NH5), comprises a sherd from the upper part of the vessel, with a single broad shallow cavetto zone, with evidence for a further zone below. The rim is pointed with a steep internal concave bevel (Fig. 8.30.1). The exterior is decorated with horizontal bands of twisted cord impressions. A fragment of a bone pin was found in association with the vessel (McCullagh & Tipping 1998:92; Battley 1998: 130). V75 from Alt Na Fearna (NH5) is slightly zoned. Within the upper zone twisted cord impressions were

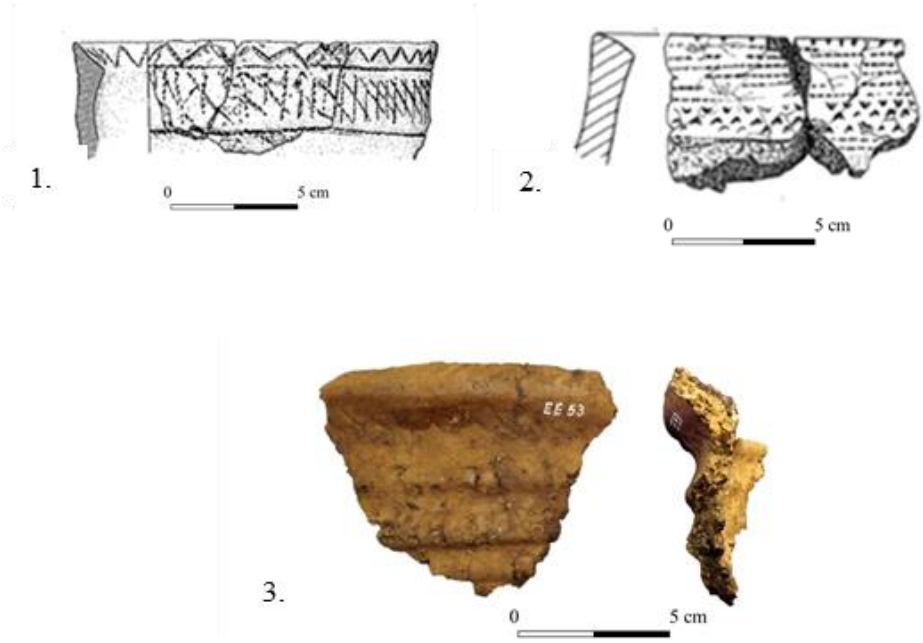

Figure 8.30: *Indeterminate Food Vessels recovered from funerary contexts in the North Highlands):*

Key: ***1.*** *V75, Alt Na Fearna (NH5), Sutherland (McCullagh & Tipping 1998: Figure 91),* ***2.*** *EQ633, Embo (NH17), Sutherland (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: Figure 23),* ***3.*** *Strath Fleet (NH29), Sutherland (Author © N.M.S)*

arranged creating a lattice-like effect. The inner bevel of the rim is decorated with horizontal chevrons created through twisted cord impressions. EQ634 from Embo (NH17) is decorated with comb impressions, paired with a band of false relief. The sherds from Carn Liath (NH10) are labelled as Food Vessel in the report and described as being decorated with "*crudely-impressed cord decoration*" (Love 1991: 165), but no further information is available[14].

Grooved-shoulder

Grooved-shoulder Food Vessels showed a high degree of consistency with heights ranging from 140-190mm tall and rim diameters between 127-165mm (Fig. 8.31). All three vessels were defined by two horizontal grooves above the shoulder (Fig. 8.32). Both the Sandhill (NH27) and Crackaig (NH14) vessels sport distinct triangular stop gaps. In the case of the Sandhills (NH27) vessel these extend over both grooves (Fig. 8.33). At Crackaig (NH14) stops are alternately positioned in the upper and lower groove, whilst the Achinchanter (NH2) vessel is decorated with perforated lugs. Rims across the group are similar, comprising a thick collar like rim, with the Sandhill (NH27) vessel having the broadest rim diameter of the group. The inner face of the rim provides a further area for decoration. The vessels from Crackaig (NH14) and Sandhill (NH27) are decorated above and below the shoulder with horizontal cord

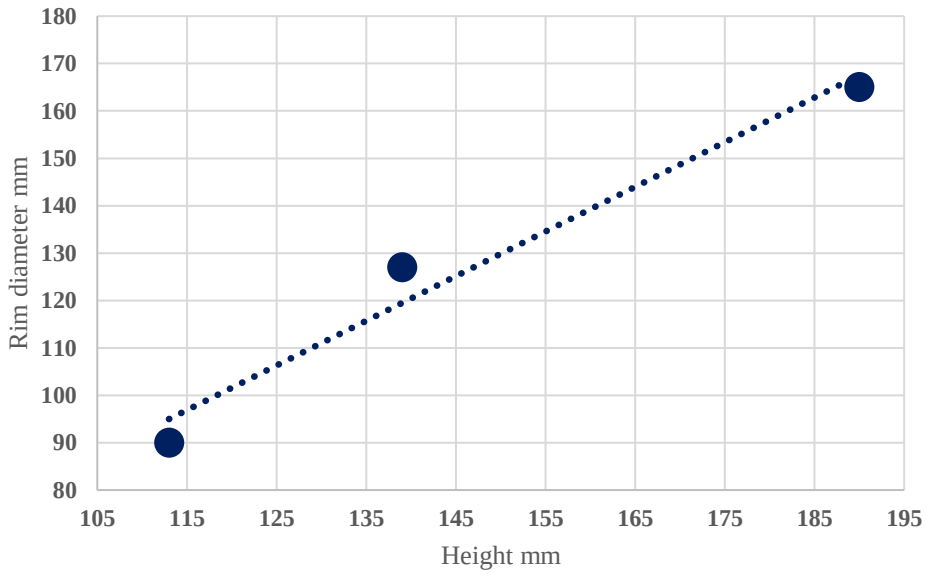

Figure 8.31: *Height and rim diameter of grooved-shoulder Food Vessels from funerary contexts in North Highlands*

[14] *Sherds from Carn Liath (NH10) were noted at Dunrobin Castle Museum in 2015 by the author but it was not possible to examine these in detail.*

Figure 8.32: *Grooved-shoulder Food Vessels from funerary contexts in the North Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *Achinchanter (NH2), Sutherland,* ***2.*** *Crackaig (NH2), Sutherland* ***3.*** *Sandhills, Dalmore (NH27), Caithness* ***1., 2****. Author © Dunrobin Museum,* ***3.*** *Author © Marischal Museum*)

impressions, interposed with bands of vertical impressions creating a zoned effect akin to that seen on Beakers. Twisted cord decoration extends onto the outer and inner face of the rim. The stop gaps are decorated with cord impressions, forming triangular patterns. The Achinchanter (NH2) vessel in contrast is decorated with a rough incised herringbone pattern above and below the shoulder.

The broad similarity of the vessels despite minor differences in lugs/ stops and decoration is suggestive of a degree of contact and a sharing of ceramic technology across the area.

Figure 8.33: *Triangular stop gaps on grooved-shoulder Food Vessels from funerary context in the North Highlands*

Key: ***1.*** *Sandhills, Dalmore (NH27), Caithness,* ***2.*** *Crackaig (NH14), Sutherland,* ***3.*** *Achinchanter (NH2), Sutherland*

Similarities were reinforced through contextual associations, with both the Sandhills (NH27) and Achinchanter (NH2) vessels associated with inhumations. The former was associated with a female young adult (Bruce 1986: 37). At Crackaig (NH14) the nature of the human remains, if any were found, is not stated. Both the Sandhills (NH27) and Achinchanter (NH2) vessels were associated with further grave goods. At Sandhill (NH27) a fragment of a flint knife was found (A. Sheridan pers. comm.)[15]. It is possible that the flint spear from Strath Fleet (NH29) (1871: 50) is a knife as well. From the cist at Achinchanter (NH2), located near the jaw came a barbed and tanged arrowhead made of Antrim flint (Davidson, J.L. 1940: 15). In addition, a badly degraded fragment of bronze was found, possibly a pin or awl (**App. H3**). This could imply a female burial, although these can be found with male burials (see Woodward & Hunter, J. 2015: Table 11.15, Table 11.16). Davidson notes that the vessel from Cist 2 at

[15] *The flint had originally been described as a leaf shaped arrowhead (MacCallum 1962: 24)*

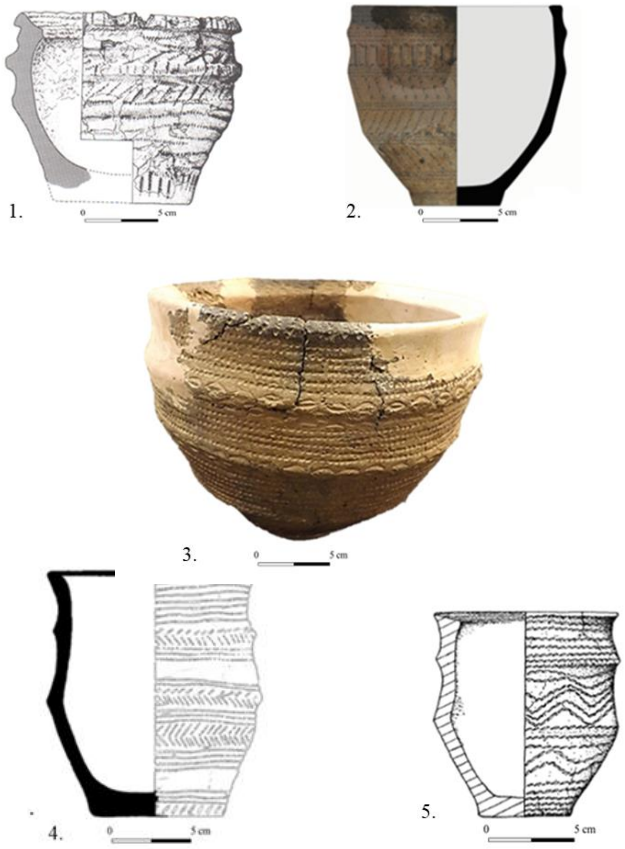

Figure 8.34: *Double-cavetto Food Vessels recovered from funerary contexts in the North Highlands:*

Squat, double-cavetto:

Key: ***1.*** *V155, Achinduich (NH3), Sutherland (McCullagh & Tipping 1998: Figure 90),* ***2.*** *Keas Cottage (NH21), Sutherland (Arabaolaza 2013: Figure 4),* ***3.*** *Little Creich (NH22), Sutherland (Author © N.M.S)*

Tall, double-cavetto:

Key: ***4.*** *Loch More (NH23), Sutherland (PSAS 1971: 293),* ***5.*** *EQ611, Embo (NH17), Sutherland (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: Figure 23)*

Achinchanter (NH2) was packed in with pebbles (1940: 15). Based on analogy with other sites, the placement of the vessel in the north-west corner suggests it was placed near to the head of the decayed inhumation.

Double-cavetto

In contrast to grooved-shoulder Food Vessels, double-cavetto forms were more diverse. They can be divided into tall vase forms and those with squat bowl like proportions. These include

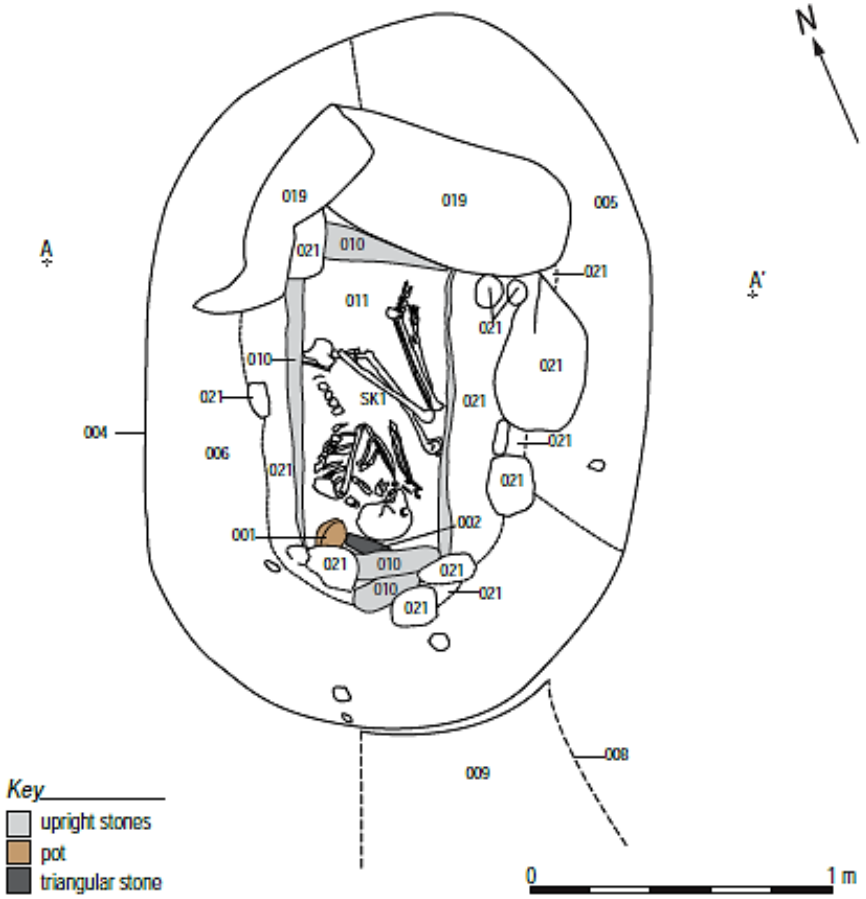

Figure 8.35: *Layout of cist at Keas Cottage (NH21), Sutherland (Arabaolaza 2013: Figure 2)*

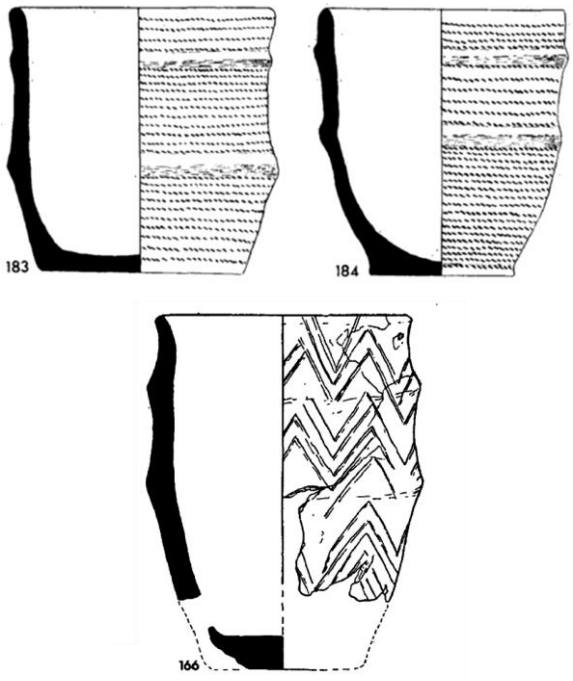

Figure 8.36: *Vessels from Luce Sands, Wigtownshire, with raised ribs and shallow concave zones between (after McInnes Fig 9, Fig 11) (not to scale)*

vessels previously classed by Burgess as Irish Scottish Bowls (Fig. 2.9). These divisions are primarily made based on physical characteristics, and to a lesser degree, contextual associations (Fig. 834).

Squat double-cavetto: Three vessels, with roughly tripartite forms and rim diameters greater than their height, were recorded from the region. Vessels sport two cavetto zones, defined by raised ridges. These ridges are typically decorated. Across the group there is a degree of variation in the position of the shoulder, reflecting choices in construction. V155 from Achinduich (NH3) sports a further moulding below the rim (Fig. 8.34.1). V155 has weakly defined cavetto zones. The lower zone is separated from the upper by a raised ridge. The rim is deeply bevelled with a slight internal projection. No human remains were found in association, and it is unclear if the vessel was deposited as part of a funerary rite. Remains of a discoidal bead necklace made primarily from cannel coal were found in association with V155. Ten of the beads were found within the vessel in the pit, and a further two were found in the pit fill (Sheridan *et al.* 1998: 123). The placement of the necklace within the vessel apparently without remains, reinforces the notion that the deposit in the pit was possibly not of a funerary nature (*ibid.*).

A single fine vessel from Keas Cottage (NH21) was associated with a female mid - older adult inhumation (Fig. 8.35). The two cavetto zones are placed high on the vessel, with the cavetto below the rim being shallow with a wider zone below. The zones are separated through two raised cordons (Fig. 8.34.2). The rim lacks an internal bevel but features a triangular inward projection. The vessel's exterior is decorated with a series of zones framed by horizontal twisted cord impressions. The lower three zones are decorated with diagonal twisted cord impressions, and the upper band with vertical comb impressions. The area below the rim is decorated with triangular impressions created with a stick or bone tip (Ballin Smith 2013: 10). The remains of an organic deposit, possibly a sheep hide was recorded, along with a triangular shaped rock. The vessel was placed behind the head, with the body orientated north/ south (Fig. 8.35). The Food Vessel from Little Creich (NH22), in contrast sports shallow but broad zones (Fig. 8.34.3). The vessel has a low ridge, defining the first cavetto zone above the shoulder. The exterior is decorated with twisted cord, combined with paired elliptical incisions, creating a false relief effect. The vessel is similar in form to that from Old Manse, Rosemarkie (SH42) (Fig. 9.48), but squatter in appearance, measuring 159mm tall with a rim diameter of 160mm. The Little Creich (NH22) vessel can also be compared with the unprovenanced example from Kishorn (Fig. 8.22). No skeletal material or other finds are recorded in association (P.S.A.S. 1981: 535).

Tall, double-cavetto: The two vessels attributed to this group depart from the previous examples in having relatively narrow profiles and Beaker like proportions. The vessel from Loch More (NH23) is an ambiguous example and could be interpreted as a Beaker. The form is comparable to examples recorded from Luce Sands decorated with all over chevrons or twisted cord (*cf.* McInnes 1964; Ritchie, J.N.G. & Shepherd, I. 1973: 20) (Figs. 2.28 & 8.36). Further examples are found in the Western Isles, including Dalmore and Allt Chrisal (Figs. 2.29 & 2.34). As noted in Shetland and Orkney these vessels can be viewed as distinct regional types blending different aspects. The placement of the Loch More (NH23) vessel into this group is tentative. The vessel features a pronounced ridge between the belly and neck of the vessel, and a second cordon on the neck (Fig. 8.34.4). The cordons divide the vessel into two zones, decorated with multiple lines of horizontal comb impressions. The rim is everted and rounded, decorated with comb impressions. The vessel is around 154mm tall, though the rim is slightly squashed giving it an elliptical appearance. Outwardly the vessel is comparable to EQ611 from Embo (NH17), which sported a narrow profile and a deep bevelled rim (Fig. 8.34.5). The Embo (NH17) vessel is shorter measuring 120mm tall with a rim diameter of 104mm. EQ611 was found in association with a female adult inhumation, accompanied by

Figure 8.37: *High-shouldered Food Vessel from Lothbeg (NH24), Sutherland (not to scale)*

various beads, including fourteen disc beads of cannel coal (Fig. 8.47). The similarity between the two vessels could be coincidental, stemming from choices made in production.

Single mid-cavetto

From a grave in Brora (NH8) a single squat single mid-cavetto vessel was recovered (Serjeantson 1911). The vessel sports a squat biconical profile with a shallow cavetto zone across the middle above the shoulder. Data for the vessel is limited, but Childe's description suggests only a single cavetto (1946: 106). The vessel is roughly 136mm tall with a rim

Figure 8.38: *Simple Food Vessels from funerary contexts in the North Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *Muie (NH25), Sutherland (Author © Dunrobin Museum),* ***2.*** *Ascoilemore (NH6), Sutherland (Davidson, J.M. 1940: Plate II)*

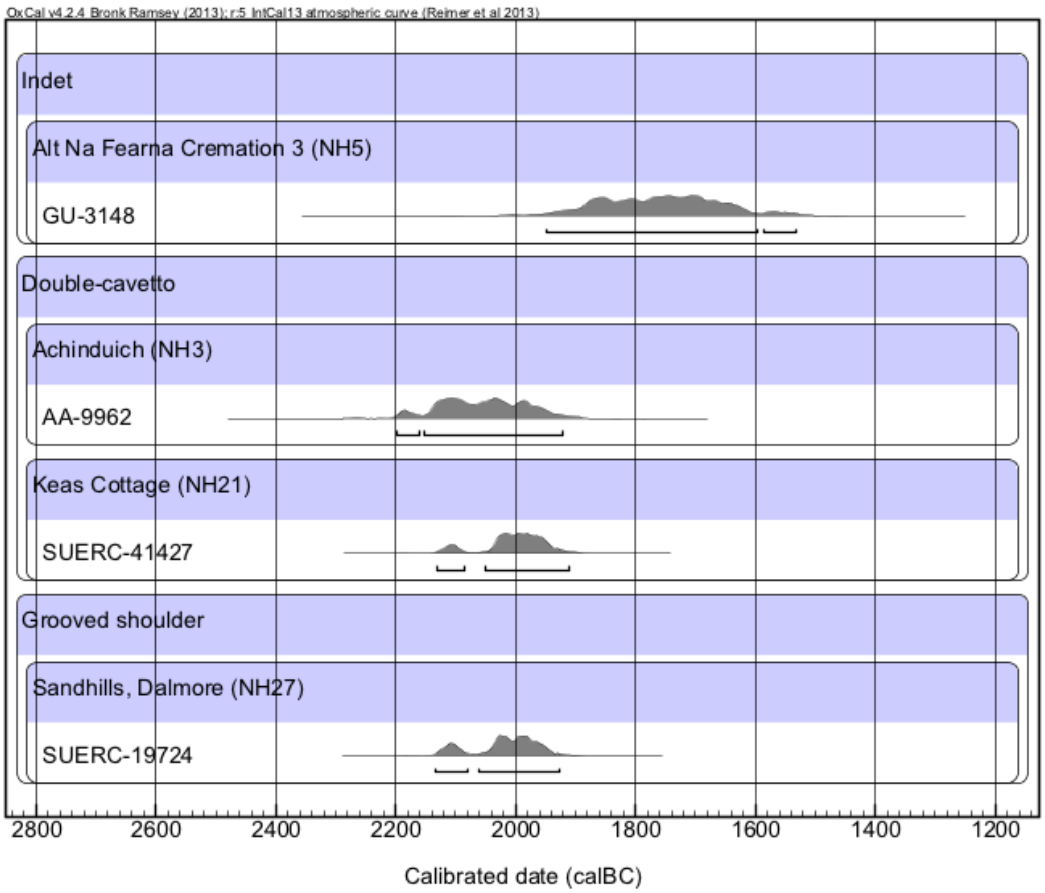

Figure 8.39: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for Food Vessels from funerary contexts in North Highlands (see **App. F3** for details)*

diameter of *c.* 140mm. The vessel has a deep, internally bevelled rim. Decoration appears to be by comb. No remains or other finds are recorded in association.

High-shouldered

Found in association with an inhumation the vessel from Lothbeg (NH24) is a high -shouldered Food Vessel with an almost vertical neck and no defined rim (Fig. 8.37). The shoulder is marked out by a series of whipped cord impressions, whilst the lower half sports a series of rough vertical incisions. The arrangement of the decoration across the exterior creates an effect reminiscent of basketry. Further whipped cord impressions are visible on the interior of the rim. Further vessels are noted from the region, but their precise relationship to this vessel is unclear (**App. D3**). The angular profile is almost collar like, akin to that observed on the vessel from Flemington (Fig. 6.39.3).

Simple

Two examples of simple Food Vessels were recorded from Muie (NH25) and Ascoilemore (NH6) (Fig. 8.38). These lack the defined shoulder and profiles of other Food Vessels. The most distinct member of this group is the vessel from Muie (NH25). The exterior of the vessel is decorated with multiple horizontal grooves separating repeating bands of incised herringbone (Fig. 8.38.1). The vessel has a slightly rounded appearance like the Newhouse (ORK12) vessel, but with an elongate profile. The vessel is *c.* 130mm tall, with a rim diameter of 140mm (Tait, L. 1870). The burial comprised an inhumation placed on its right-hand side. Underneath the skeleton were the remains of a cremation, described as "*some black greasy charred matter, which seemed to me to contain fragments of bone*" (Tait, L. 1870: 530). Tait notes that the vessel was associated with this deposit, suggesting that the cist was initially employed for a cremation burial in association with the Food Vessel, with the inhumation inserted later (*ibid.*). The only other find found in association was a single flint.

The vessel from Ascoilemore (NH6) in contrast is undecorated with a gently rounded body, with a pedestalled base (Fig. 8.38.2). The rim diameter is *c.*117mm, whilst the vessel is 98mm tall. The floor of the cist had been set with pebbles, but details regarding the burial were limited, but a black substance is purported to have come from the 'urn' prior to its removal (Davidson, J.M. 1940: 22).

	Double Cavetto	Grooved Shoulder	Indet.	Simple	Total
FEMALE	2	1	1		4
Adult	1				1
Mid Adult/ Older Adult	1				1
Young Adult		1	1		2
INDET			1		1
Subadult			1		1
MALE				1	1
Adult				1	1
UNK			1		1
Older Adult			1		1

Table 8.4: *Age and sex data by Food Vessel form from funerary contexts in the North Highlands*

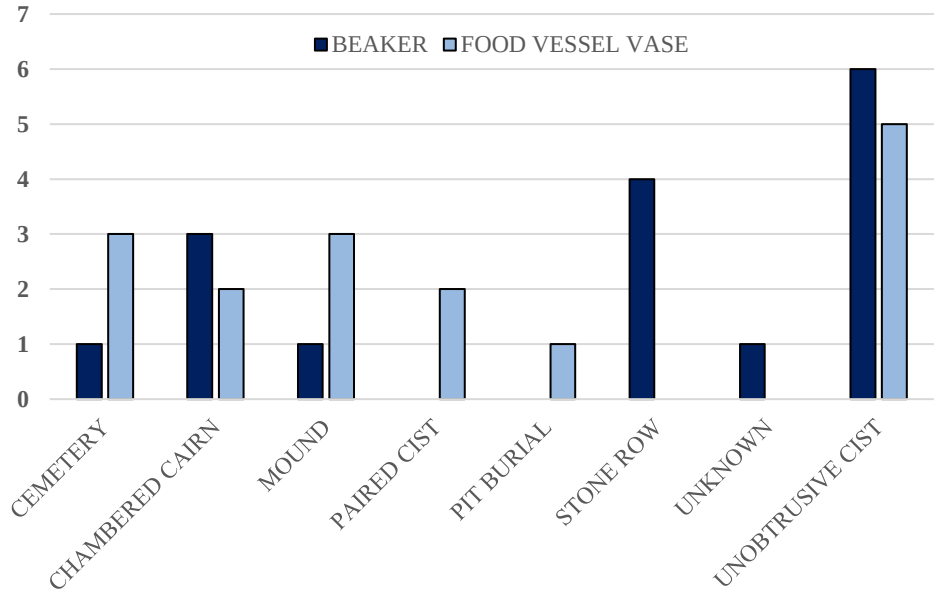

Figure: 8.40: *Contexts of Beaker and Food Vessels from the North Highlands (see **App. H1** for defintion of parent contexts)*

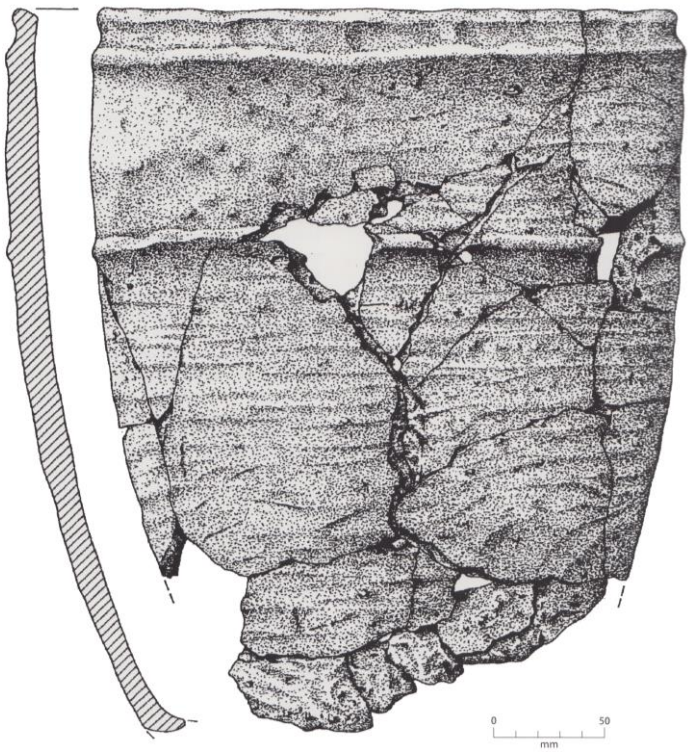

Figure 8.41: *Cordoned Urn from Lairg, Sutherland (Bradley 2011: Illustration 4.28)*

Chronology

Radiocarbon dates are limited to four sites (Fig. 8.39). The dates from Embo (NH17) relate to earlier deposits at the site (see below). The available dates show a degree of consistency ranging from 2200-1900 cal BC (Fig. 8.39). This implies that differences in vessels and association are likely related to regional preference rather than temporal differences. V75 from the cremation at Alt Na Fearna (NH5) falls slightly later than the dated vessels with inhumations, with a date range of 1950-1530 cal BC (Fig. 8.39). The inhumation from Keas Cottage (NH21) is dated to 2140-1910 cal BC (SUERC-41427) (**App. F3**), overlapping with Sandhills (NH27), dated to 2140-1920 cal BC (SUERC-19724) (**App. F3**). Given the morphological similarity of the vessel to that from Crackaig (NH14), this date suggests a currency from the late 21st – 19th century BC for Food Vessels with grooved-shoulders. As demonstrated by the cremation associated with V75 at Alt Na Fearna (NH5), towards the end of this date range there appears to be a switch to Food Vessels being deposited with cremated remains. The double-cavetto vessel, V155, from Achinduich (NH3), is not directly dated but AA-9962 provides a probable *terminus post quem* of 2200-1920 cal BC (AA-9962) (**App. F3**). This date relates to the lowest level in the mound that supported a setting of small slabs, which the pit containing V75 postdates (McCullagh & Tipping 1998: 86).

Summary

Food Vessels from funerary contexts encompass a diverse array of forms found in unobtrusive cists and cemetery sites. The recurrent association of Food Vessels with cemetery sites contrasts with Beakers which were predominantly recorded from unobtrusive cists (Fig. 8.40). The diversity of Food Vessel vases is clearly seen in double-cavetto vessels, which – based on morphology and, to a limited degree, association – could be divided into further groups. As noted above these differences likely reflect on regional preferences and modes of construction. In this scheme, varying emphasis was placed on different aspects including the position and width of cavetto zones. As with Beakers whilst vessels could be highly coded there was scope for creativity and variation.

Contextual data was limited prohibiting a fuller analysis of these trends and their relationship to factors such as age and sex (*cf.* **Chapter. 11**). 50% of the vessels were associated with inhumations, whilst 38% of the vessels remains were absent or no data was available. Where a vessel was associated with cremation these generally fell later than those with inhumations. This is based on the single date from Cremation 3 at Alt Na Fearna (NH5). (McCullagh &

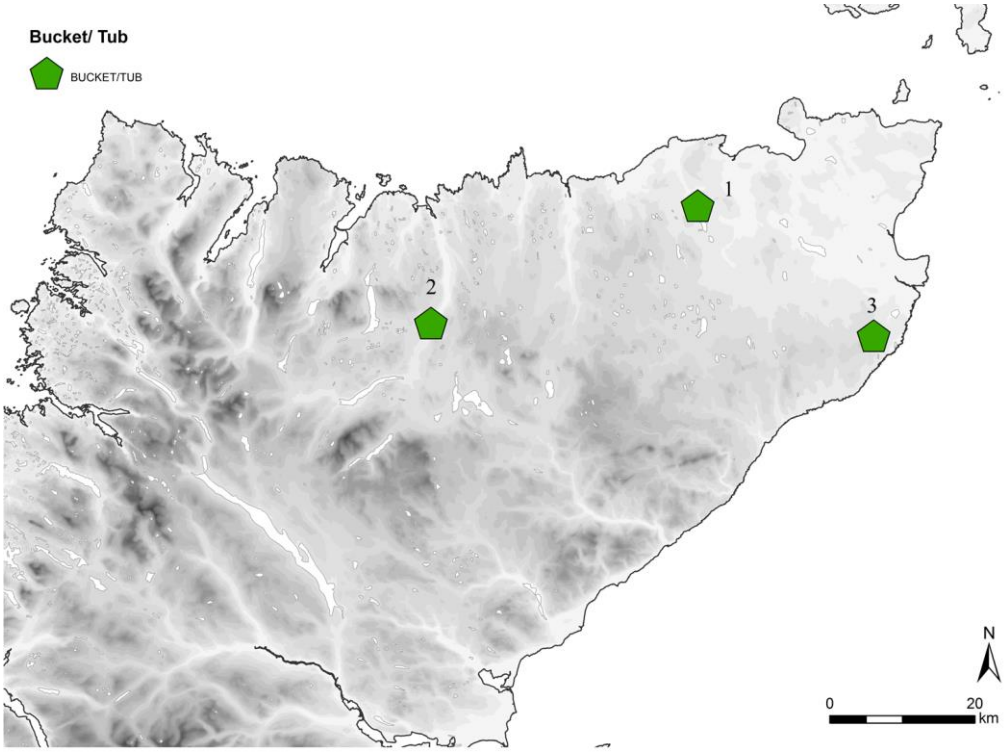

Figure 8.42: *Distribution of bucket/ tub vessels from funerary contexts in the North Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30), Caithness* ***2.*** *Woody Knowe (NH31), Sutherland* ***3.*** *Battle Moss (NH7), Caithness*

Figure 8.43: *Vessel from Woody Knowe, Strathnaver (NH31), Sutherland (Author © N.M.S.)*

Tipping 1998: 38). These burials themselves were subsequently sealed by the construction of House 2. As discussed prior, the vessel from Cremation 3 differs from the later pottery from House 2, which is talc-tempered and undecorated, except for the fragmentary V74. Talc tempered pottery appears to generally fall later as evidenced by the talc tempered Cordoned Urn from Lairg (Cowie, R. 2011: 153) (Fig. 8.41), dated to 1620-1450 cal BC (Bradley 2011: 153).

Returning to the Food Vessels, these are primarily associated with female inhumations, but the sample size was relatively small (Table 8.4). These were further distinguished using additional artefacts, creating diverse burial assemblages. Necklaces, as at Dunrobin Park (NH16), were frequently associated with female burials. The Keas Cottage (NH21) burial contained an animal hide. The use of animal hides has been recorded at several other sites including the burial at Langwell Farm (Lelong 2015). There are few discernible patterns in association, beyond the presence of artefacts with female burials in association with double-cavetto vessels. Whilst it would be tempting to suggest that flint knives are male, examples of flint knives have been noted with female burials (*i.e.* Walsh 2013; Woodward & Hunter, J. 2014). It is possible that the majority of flint artefacts in the North Highlands during this period were non-gendered, being associated with both males and females (*cf.* **Chapter 11**).

In summary, Food Vessels represent a chronologically consistent group. Differences in form do not appear to be related to distinctions in age and sex or funerary practice. Instead differences appear to reflect on technology and preference within regions. In the case of Crackaig (NH14) and Sandhill (NH27), a degree of overlap in technology is visible suggesting a possible connection between the two regions.

8.3.4 Bucket/ tub

Three examples of simple bucket-shaped vessels were recorded from the chambered cairn at Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30) and from the stone row at Battle Moss (NH7). A further vessel was recorded from the short-cist at Woody Knowe (NH31) in Sutherland (Fig. 8.42). The pot from Woody Knowe (NH31) has previously been described as a Beaker, although aspects of its form are more in line with bucket/ tub vessels as it lacks a sinuous profile (Fig. 8.41) (see **Chapter 4**).

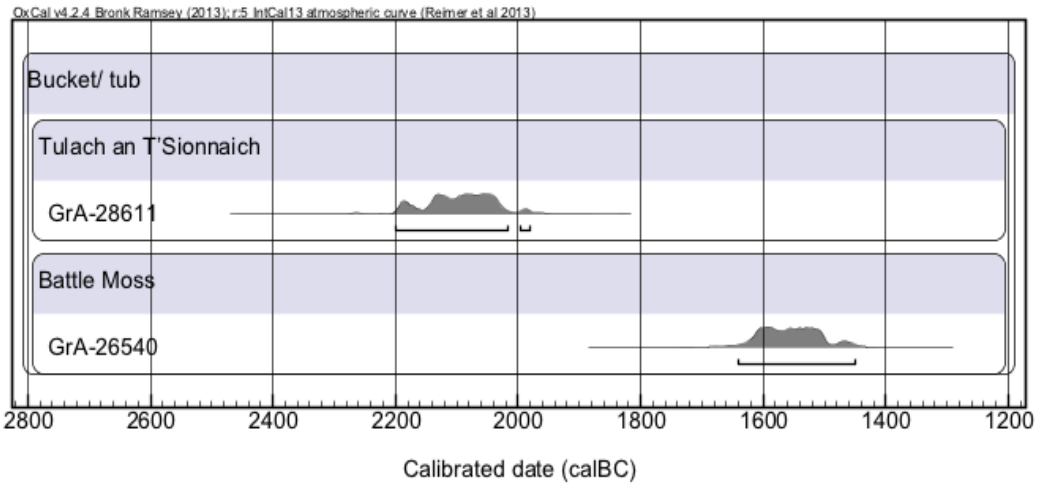

Figure 8.44: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for bucket/ tub vessels found in funerary contexts in the North Highlands (see **App. F3** for details)*

Funerary Contexts

The vessel from Woody Knowe (NH31) is reputed to have been discovered in an unobtrusive cist set in a gravel pit (P.S.A.S 1934: 413). The remaining two vessels were recovered from the ring cairn at Battle Moss (NH5) and the chambered cairn at Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30). At Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30) the vessel was found in relation to a cremation burial in the slip to the south of the heel-shaped cairn and disturbed layers in the upper level of the cairn (Corcoran 1967: 3).

Morphology & Associations

In two cases vessels were undiagnostic, comprising simple bucket shapes. Alongside the bucket/ tub vessel from Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30) a second comb impressed sherd probably from a Beaker, was recorded (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1991: 148) (see **Section 8.4.3** for further discussion of contexts and associations). The bucket/ tub vessel had been fired at such a low temperature that very little of the vessel had survived (Corcoran 1967: 12). The Battle Moss (NH5) vessel was in a similar condition, comprising small fragmentary sherds (A. Sheridan pers. comm.). The vessel from Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30) was associated with an unsexed cremation, two flint chips and a possible scraper. From Woody Knowe (NH31) came a taller vessel, decorated by incision (Fig. 8.43). Whilst initially reported as a Beaker it is more appropriate in terms of form to describe the vessels as bucket/ tub owing to the absence of a defined sinuous profile. The vessel has a poorly defined beaded rim and is 190mm tall with a rim diameter of 130mm. The exterior was decorated with narrow horizontal

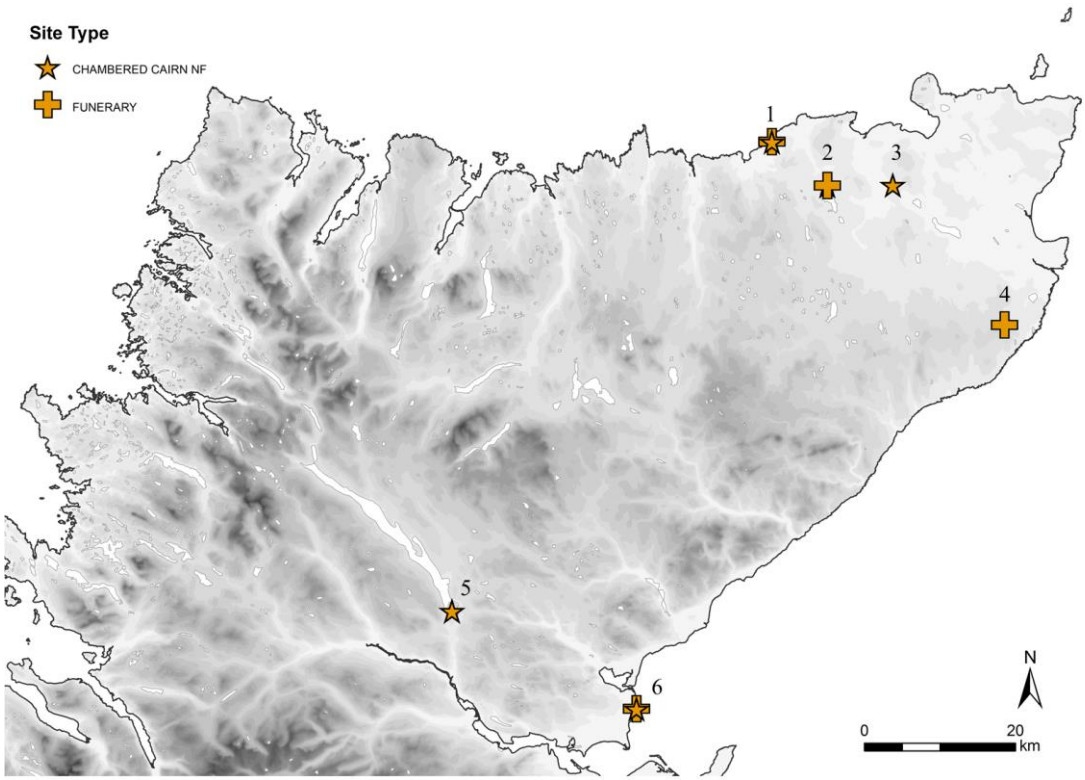

Figure 8.45: *Distribution of chambered cairns with later 3rd millennium pottery in the North Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *Cnoc Na H'Uiseig, (NH13), Caithness,* ***2.*** *Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30),* ***3.*** *Cnoc na Ciste (NH12), Caithness,* ***4.*** *South Yarrows (NH28), Caithness* ***5.*** *Ord North (NH26), Sutherland* ***6.*** *Embo (NH17), Sutherland*

bands infilled with short vertical incisions (Fig. 8.43). The use of zoned decoration, as noted in the case of vessels from Orkney, draws on modes of decoration found among Beakers. The vessel is comparable with examples from Needham's Late Beaker group, suggesting a late date (Table 3.2).

Chronology

Radiocarbon dates are available for the vessels from Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30) and Battle Moss (NH5) (Fig. 8.44). The date from Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30) spans the period 2140 - 1970 cal BC but based on dating of other cremations in the region the burial the date is likely to fall towards the later end of the date range. The Battle Moss (NH5) vessel dates later than the period under study here, suggesting a large gap between the initial Beaker deposits and the later cremation.

Summary

Bucket-shaped vessels can be broadly divided into two groups. The first as seen at Woody Knowe (NH31) draws on similar construction techniques as Beakers but lacks a distinct sinuous profile. Bucket-shaped vessels are associated with cremations, as at Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30), an association that, as seen at Battle Moss (NH5), was long lived.

8.4 Chambered cairns: Non-funerary

8.4.1 Nature of the evidence

As discussed in **Chapter 5**, chambered cairns are one of the primary contexts in which ceramic finds have been recorded from within the region. Six individual finds were recorded from chambered cairns, including the previously discussed vessels associated with funerary activity at Embo (NH17), Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30), Cnoc Na H'Uiseig (NH13) and South Yarrows (NH28). Recorded finds were predominantly located in Caithness, with four chambered cairns producing later 3rd millennium pottery. In Sutherland, finds were recorded from only two sites, Ord North (NH26) and Embo (NH17). Late cists could have been inserted into the chamber at Shean Stemster, but information is lacking (*cf.* Henshall 1963: 286). At each site, a variety of ceramic types were recorded including earlier collared bowls (**Chapter 6**). Beakers formed the dominant ceramic type being found at all of the chambered cairns except for the Ord North (NH26) and Cnoc Na Ciste (NH12). The ceramic assemblage at Cnoc na Ciste (NH12) comprised a single shouldered/ cavetto zoned vessel, whilst at Ord North (NH26) two simple and waisted squat vessels were recorded.

8.4.2 Cnoc Na H'Uiseig, Lower Dounreay, (NH13)

Contexts

The chambered cairn comprised an inner chamber of irregular shape with six upright slabs projecting from the side of the wall (Edwards 1928: 141). The floor of the chamber was paved, sealed by a clay layer containing human and animal bones, along with a few artefacts (*ibid.*). From this layer, sherds of two or three Beakers, EO357, EO361 and EO358 were recovered (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1991: 126). EO357 and EO361 could derive from the same vessel. The final Beaker, EO360 was found in the secondary cist set 0.9m above the ground surface, inserted following the collapse of the roof (Henshall 1963: 280). The cist was paved and

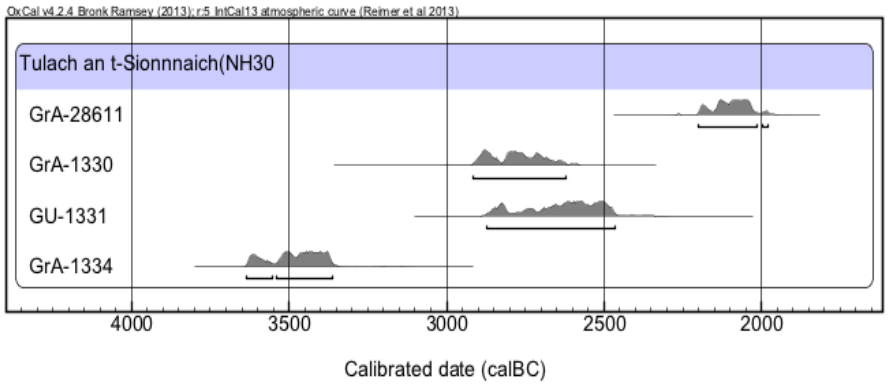

Figure 8.46: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30), Caithness (see **App. F3** for details)*

contained a single inhumation covered with shingle (Edwards 1928:142). The stratigraphy and association of the sinuous/ low-carinated sherds with the cist is unclear and may have been intermingled with the shingle infill (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1991: 126). The previously discussed EO360 (**Section 8.3.2**) could have been associated with the burial.

Artefacts

The pottery was highly fragmentary, but enough survived to allow for tentative reconstruction of vessel profiles. These include the previously discussed vessel, EO360, possibly associated with the cist. The remaining sherds EO361 (and ?EO357?) comprised a probable low-carinated or s-profile Beaker decorated with bands of twisted cord decoration. The rim diameter was around 120mm, with the rim coming to a slight external point.

Chronology

The vessels from the filling likely predates EO360, which was found in the cist. EO357 and EO361 were intermixed with the clay material, which could have been deliberately placed into the chamber. This material was mixed with an ox phalange and an axe of micaceous sandstone. The form and style of the vessels supports the notion of two early vessels being deposited with the long cist being inserted post-2300 BC. The young adult from the long cist is undated.

8.4.3 Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30)

Contexts

A single bucket-shaped vessel was found in the slip in association with a cremation (**Section 8.3.4**), and further sherds were recovered from the upper disturbed layers (Corcoran 1967: 14).

Event	Finds
Construction of Chamber I and the cairn. Chamber II added at the end of the first phase of construction	*First burials deposited on the floor, at least three adults, a child and an infant.*
Layer of infill in Chamber I (and II?)	*Second group of burials atop the infill – only a single burial placed above filling of Chamber II.* *EQ612 and EQ632 derive from these deposits, association with burials unclear.*
Passage and antechamber of I blocked, sand percolated into the chamber from upper part of the cairn – sealing bones	*This is the sand that was presumably disturbed in 1956 containing* ***EQ612*** *and* ***EQ632***
Roof removed, and cist inserted into Chamber I. Period of time could have passed between removal of roof and insertion of cist as shown by infiltration of sand.	*Disturbance of finds from sand layer, including* ***EQ612*** *and* ***EQ632*** ***South chamber cist:*** *Fusiform bead of jet, cannel coal and fourteen disc beads of cannel coal, and EQ11.*
At same time as above a cist was inserted into the centre of the cairn and upper part of Chamber II dismantled	***EQ634*** *and* ***EQ633*** *(re-deposited).*
Cremations continue to be deposited until the mid-Bronze Age.	

Table 8.5: *Summary phasing of Embo (NH17), Sutherland (after Henshall & Wallace 1965a, see also Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: 135-40)*

The site comprised a chamber set into a heel-shaped cairn, with a later rectangular cairn added to the rear, creating a long cairn. The internal chamber was roughly square and paved with two large slabs. The upper part of the chamber had been disturbed, with the corbelling having collapsed, sealing a lower layer of probable deliberate infill. The filling comprised tightly packed deposits of charcoal and molluscs, and in the north part of the chamber deposits of intensely burnt animal bone, charcoal and burnt earth were deposited (*ibid.*).

Artefacts

A single probable Beaker, EO1108, was recovered from the disturbed upper layers of the cairn to the north of the chamber (Corcoran 1967: 14). The vessel is fragmentary, comprising only the neck and rim. The rim is rounded and slightly everted, whilst the neck is decorated with horizontal incisions and a narrow band of lattice decoration.

Chronology

Four radiocarbon dates are available for the site, extending from the 4th through to the later 3rd millennium (Fig. 8.46). The deliberate infilling of the chamber appears to have taken place in the first half of the 3rd millennium and the two dates from the deer bone likely relate to this episode. These range from 2920-2610 cal BC (GrA-1330) (**App. F3**) and, 2880-2460 cal BC

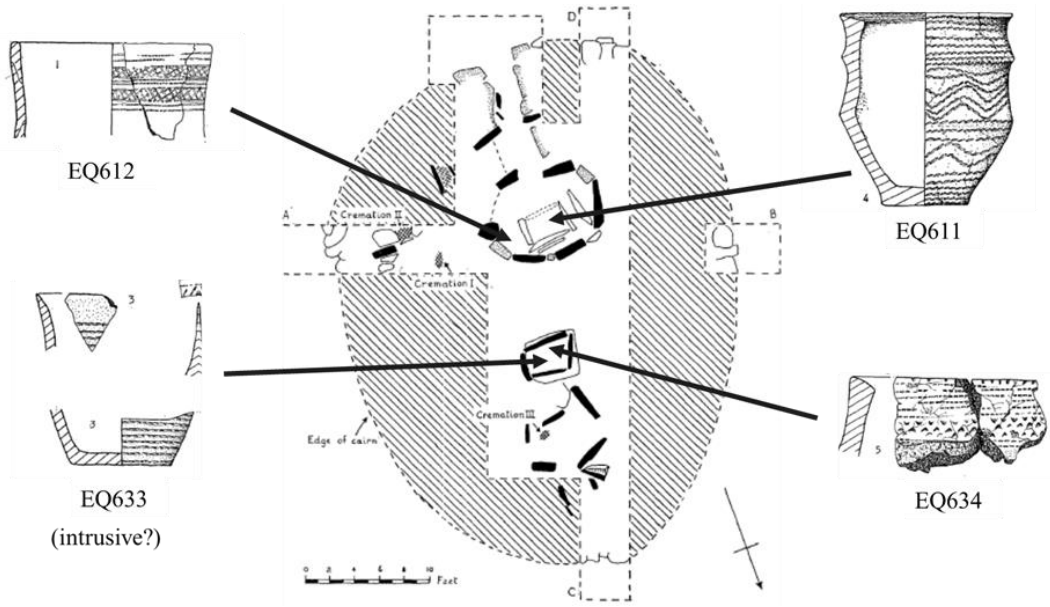

Figure 8.47: *Approximate location of principal ceramics found at Embo (NH17), Sutherland excluding EQ632 (After Henshall & Wallace 1965: Fig 2, finds from Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: Figure 23)*

(GU-1331) (**App. F3**) (Fig. 8.46). There is some suggestion that the deposition of EO1108 could have been concurrent with the modification of the mound (Corcoran 1967: 17) but given the level of disturbance this is unclear. These vessels likely pre-date the cremation discussed in **Section 8.3.4** dated by GrA-28611 (**App. F3**). The deposition of this cremation burial appears to represent the final act on the site, being deposited into a small pit dug into the slip, in the area between the heel shaped façade and the outer wall.

8.4.4 Embo (NH17)

Contexts

As noted in the previous discussion of EQ6111 (**Section 8.3.2**) patterns of deposition at Embo (NH17) are complex, involving multiple episodes of deposition, including the insertion of two later cists (Table 8.4). The chambered cairn itself comprised two back to back chambers, with the south chamber being the largest of the two (Fig. 8.47). It was in this chamber that the cist containing EQ611 was set, whilst EQ634 and EQ633 came from the between the two chambers (Fig. 8.47). The remaining sherds, EQ612 and EQ633, could not be directly associated with funerary activity but came from disturbed deposits (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: 139; Wilkin 2016: 289).

Artefacts

EQ612 comprised **s**herds from the rim and body of a probable s-profile Beaker. Decorated by fine comb impressions in at least two zones, each having two cross-hatched bands, edged and divided by horizontal lines. Faint transverse impressions occur across the inner face of the rim, which is pointed externally. The final vessel, EQ632 comprised a sherd from the neck/ rim of a vessel with a sub-rim cordon, probably from a low-carinated Beaker. The vessel was decorated with comb impressions. In addition to the ceramic finds, a flint knife (EQ613) was found in the south chamber, but its exact position is unclear. The knife could have come from the cist, or near the cist above the dark layer (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: 139). Beads of jet and cannel coal were found in the cist in the south chamber, possibly in association with EQ611, but several beads had been displaced. Fragments of bronze razors were associated with the later cremations (*ibid.*) (see Fig. 8.47 regarding finds distribution).

Chronology

The sequence of deposition is unclear, but the AOC vessel EQ633 from the cist, could be early, although as noted in **Chapter 2**, low-carinated forms can be long lived. The original position

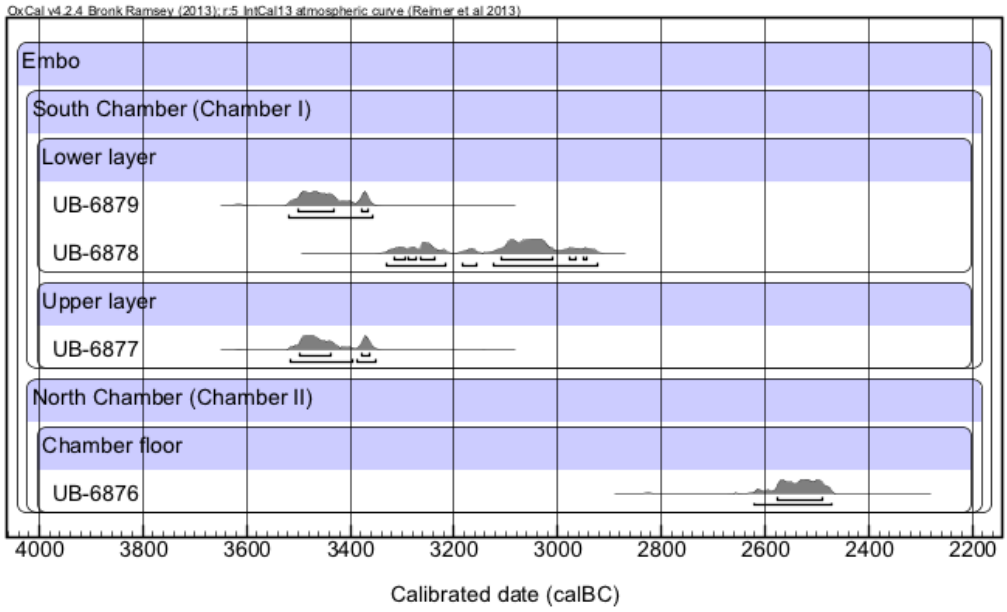

Figure 8.48: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates from Embo (NH17), Sutherland (see **App. F3** for details)*

of the vessel is unclear, having been disturbed by the later cist constructions associated with the Food Vessel EQ634 (*cf.* **Section 8.3.2**). EQ612 from the south chamber appears to predate the cist, deriving from sand disturbed in the 1956 excavation. In summary, the ceramic deposits relate to two broad phases, the first associated with Beakers, postdating the deliberate infill. Whether these were associated with burials is unclear owing to later funerary activity (*cf.* **Section 8.3.2**). It is probable that the other Beakers and Food Vessels relate to a second phase postdating the removal of the roof, disturbing the earlier deposits (Table 8.4).

Four of the radiocarbon dates have large standard deviations and are excluded from the analysis (*cf.* **App. F3**). The remaining dates for bones from the south chamber suggest two separate phases of deposition extending across a lengthy time frame (Fig. 8.48). The first phase probably relates to the original use of the site, 3520-3350 cal BC (UB-6879) (**App. F3**), and a second phase in the later 4th millennium, 3330-2920 cal BC (UB-6878) (**App. F3**). The single date for material from the upper deposits overlaps (UB-6877) (**App. F3**) (Fig. 8.48) but given the level of disturbance the stratigraphic security and relationship of these dates is unclear. The single date for human bone from the floor of the north chamber provide a *terminus post quem* for the deposition of the Beakers, 2630-2470 cal BC (UB-6876) (**App. F3**), this date is in line with early dates for low-carinated Beakers from Britain (Table 2.1).

Figure 8.49: *Food Vessel from Cnoc na Ciste (NH12), Caithness (Author © N.M.S)*

8.4.5 Cnoc Na Ciste (NH12)

Contexts

A single Food Vessel was recovered from a niche in the wall of the chamber with a light slab in front (O.N.B 1872: 17). No funerary remains are recorded in association (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1991: 108). It is possible that this vessel was part of a larger assemblage of material, as several cists are reputed to have been found in the top of the cairn before 1871 (O.N.B, 1872: 16; Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1991: 109).

Artefacts

The recovered vessel is a tall Food Vessel with a single deep groove at the shoulder (Fig. 8.49). The rim diameter measured 113mm with a height of 90mm. The exterior is decorated with string impressions in horizontal lines above the groove and panels of vertical herringbone below. The vessel is outwardly similar to other examples of grooved-shoulder Food Vessels recorded from funerary contexts (Fig 8. 49) but has only a single groove above the shoulder and a broad cavetto zone above.

		Associated C14 Date (see **App. F3**, Fig. 8.50)
1.	Deposits of collared bowls ('Unstan Ware') and several other sherds in antechamber	GU-1168, GU-1169
2.	Main deposits into primary chamber. Several fragments deposited outside the chambered cairn	GU-1172
3.	Closure, deposition of cremation into passage way.	?GU-1173?
4.	Collapse of roof	
5.	Deposition of ON30, ON33 and bone mount along with further cremation	GrA-28614

Table 8.6: *Sharples sequence of deposition and events at Ord North (NH26), Sutherland (1981)*

8.4.6 Ord North (NH26)

Contexts

At the Ord North (NH26), following its initial use, the roof collapsed (possibly deliberately demolished) and the entrance was blocked. In this deposit were the remains of a cremated child (Sharples 1981: 29). The blocking extended out from the passage merging into the outer platform, suggesting that the blocking and creation of the outer platform are contemporaneous (*ibid.*) (Table 8.6). On top of the roof collapse, a series of cremations were placed into the chamber, sealed by a further layer of slabs (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: 157-158; Sharples 1981: 32).

The ceramic assemblage included early carinated types and a later simple globular Food Vessel bowl (ON30), and the base of a further fragmentary vessel (ON33) (Fig. 8.50). ON33 was recovered from the filling of the chamber following the collapse of the roof relating to the latest phase of the site (P5) (Table 8.6). The simple globular Food Vessel bowl was likely associated with the bone mount in burial B and was found in multiple locations including above fallen corbel stone (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: 67). Both vessels could have initially been deposited around the same time (Sharples 1981: 54). Within this collapsed

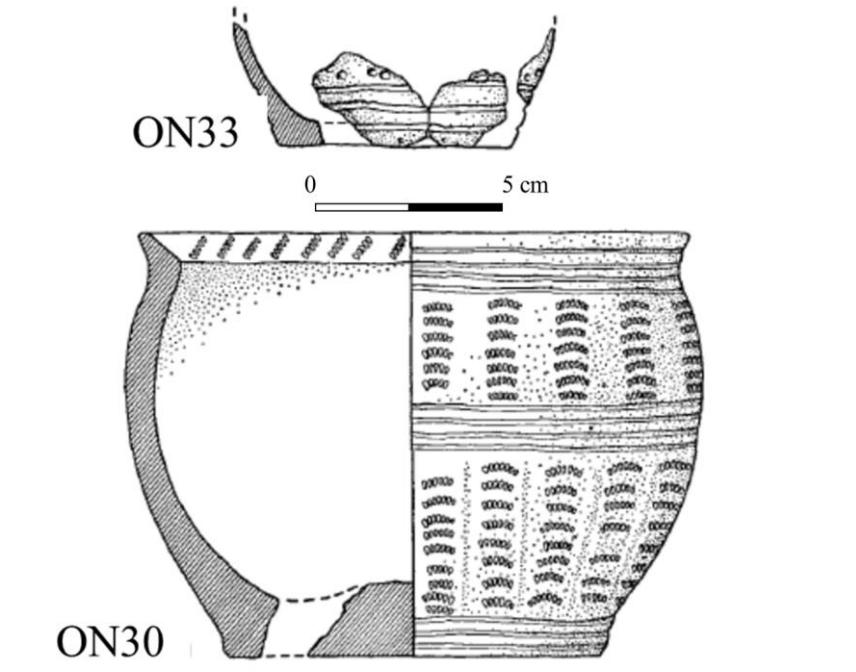

Figure 8.50: *Base and simple globular Food Vessel bowl from the Ord North (NH26), Sutherland (Sharples 1981)*

material were several cremation deposits along with the bone mount, but the exact relationships of these is unclear (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: 67; Sharples 1981, 54).

Artefacts

The simple Food Vessel bowl, ON30, has a globular profile with a convex base and a maximum rim diameter of 130mm. The exterior is divided into two zones, separated by bands of horizontal incisions (Fig. 8.50). The spaces between are infilled with vertical rows of maggot impressions, which decorate the internal bevel of the rim. The position of the sherds suggested that the vessel had been broken up prior to deposition (Sharples 1981: 36). The basal sherd, ON33, is straight with a curving profile. The outer surface is decorated with three horizontal lines with a series of dot impressions above. The vessel has in the past been interpreted as the base of a Beaker[16](Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: 65) but could belong to a further squat bowl. Sharples suggested that the base could reflect a mix of Food Vessel and Beaker elements (1981: 42).

[16] *The excavator initially suggested the sherds could belong to a Grooved Ware vessel (Henshall 1972a, 578; Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: 65)*

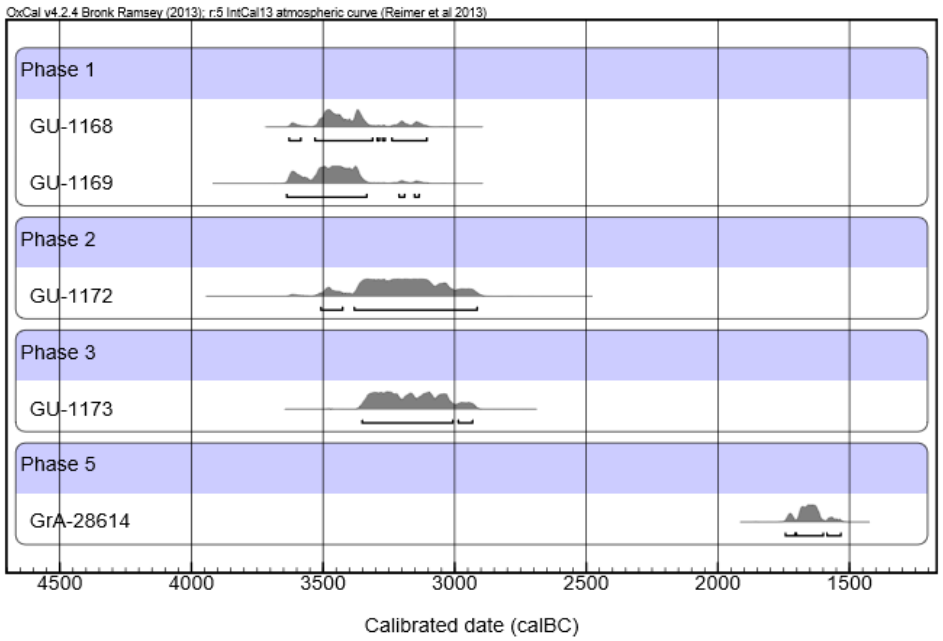

Figure 8.51: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for the Ord North (NH26), Sutherland (see **App. F3** for details)*

The bone mount from the Ord North was suggested to be part of a mace head handle akin to the example from Bush Barrow (Sharples 1981: 42). But there are marked differences, and the Bush Barrow mounts do not provide a suitable parallel for the item from the Ord North (NH26). The mount measures around 24mm long with a diameter of 18mm (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1995: 67). Decoration comprises a single band of incised zig zag.

Chronology

Disentangling the chronology of the deposits within the chamber and their associations is complicated by later disturbance (Table 8.6) (Fig. 8.51). The deposition of ON33, ON30, the bone mount and the various cremations relates to the final phase recently re-dated to 1750-1530 cal BC (GrA-28614) (**App. F3**). The degree of association between this date and the Food Vessels is unclear, but analogy with similar dated vessels implies that this date postdates the vessels (Sheridan 2004a: 249). Dates for the earlier phases are based on mixed charcoal and sport large standard deviations (**App. F3**), but suggest the chambered cairn was initially in use from around the mid-4th millennium.

8.4.7 South Yarrows (NH28)

Only one vessel was found at South Yarrows (NH28). All the finds, except for ten of the lignite beads are now lost. Henshall provides a catalogue of the pottery, among which is described a

broken pot 150-180mm high with an everted rim with parallel impressions of twisted cord (1963: 292; see also Anderson 1886: 237-40). Henshall suggests that the pot could be a Food Vessel. This vessel was associated with a secondary cist built into the south side of the ante chamber (Davidson, J.L. & Henshall 1991: 141). The pot was associated with a necklace of around 70 lignite beads. While no bones were found, there were traces of possible cremated bones.

8.4.8 Summary

Deposition at chambered cairns took place over multiple periods as evidenced by the limited radiocarbon dates and the ceramic finds. As discussed in **Section 8.3**, some of this is related to funerary activity, it is not possible in the other examples to establish a clear link between the two. Despite this, chambered cairns continued to act as key locales drawing in further deposition. Whether this was mundane or structured, however, remains unclear. At Embo (NH17) a series of deposits were created over time, with a range of funerary and non-funerary deposits. The single Food Vessel from Cnoc na Ciste (NH12) could represent the remains of a structured deposit.

8.5 Summary: Regional characteristics

In summary, the vessels from the North Highlands encompass all the primary parent groups, with four nodal forms represented. These were primarily recovered from funerary contexts, while domestic assemblages were rare. Chambered cairns and stone rows provided a further important focus for deposition. In the following section I will summarise the key types, associations and chronology, producing a summary of key trends.

Beakers

Beakers were common occurring in both funerary and domestic contexts. Precise definition of forms in the case of the latter was often difficult, complicated by the fragmentary condition of the pottery. Considering the limited domestic evidence, it is only possible to critique in detail how vessels were categorised through funerary practice, or as part of deposition at chambered cairns (Table 8.7). As noted it is not clear if these vessels were redeposited or part of structured depositions. Whilst commonly occurring as single finds, in several cases vessels formed part of longer depositional sequences, for instance at Achinduich (NH3) and Battle Moss (NH5). Short-necked and s-profile Beakers were preferred, with the bulk of the finds located in

Sub-Form	Site Type	Key Characteristics	Notes
Low-carinated	Funerary Chambered cairn (NF)	RD: 120-150mm Height: 175-205mm Dec: Twisted cord – typically all over Comb and other impressed modes are present	Mix of tall and short low-carinated vessels. Tall types could be indicative of domestic vessels
S-profile	Funerary Chambered cairn (NF)	RD: n/a Height: n/a Dec: Combination of incision and comb arranged in zones	S-profile vessels rare. Examples include single weak s-profile vessel Where osteological data recorded, found in association with female burial.
Tall Short-necked	Funerary	RD: 130mm Height: 194mm Dec: Comb	One recorded example, associated with male burial
Short-necked	Funerary	RD: 138mm Height:165mm Dec: Comb	One example in association with female burial
Squat short-necked (rim > or = height)	Funerary	RD: 147-157mm Height:150-157mm Dec: Comb, Comb/ Incision	Associated with male burial

Table 8.7: *Principal Beaker forms from the North Highlands*

Caithness. In Sutherland Beakers occur in a cluster between the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet, with a handful of examples at Golspie. The only inland examples are the tentative sherds from Achinduich (NH3) and Alt Na Fearna (NH5).

Sub-Form	Site Type	Key Characteristics	Notes
Grooved-shoulder (paired grooves)	Funerary	RD:127-165mm Club/ collar like rim Height: 139-190mm Dec: Twisted cord, incision. Decoration extends onto bevel of rim	Pair of horizontal grooves above the shoulder. Triangular stop gaps on two of the vessels, the third with perforated lugs (Fig. 8.33)
Grooved-shoulder (Single groove)	Chambered Cairn NF	RD:113mm Club/ collar like rim Height: 90mm Dec: Twisted cord. Decoration extends onto bevel of rim	Only one example recorded. Form outwardly resembles those with pairs of grooves.
Squat double-cavetto	Funerary	RD:150-240mm Height: 120-132mm Dec: Twisted cord, one example with twisted cord and fingernail impressions	Vessels have a roughly tripartite appearance with two cavetto zones defined by raised ribs. Three recorded examples
Tall double-cavetto	Funerary	RD: 104mm Height: 120-154mm Dec: Twisted cord, comb	As with the above examples, cavetto zones are marked out by applied or pinched up ribs. Profile of vessels is reminiscent of Beaker forms
Single mid-cavetto	Funerary	RD: 140mm Height: 136mm Dec: Comb	Squat profile, where rim diameter > than height
High-shouldered	Funerary	Dec: Incision and whipped cord around shoulder	Tall vessel with shoulder and straight neck
Simple	Funerary	RD: 117-140mm Height:98-130mm Dec: Multiple grooves and incised herringbone; Second undecorated vessel	Lack the distinct profile of other Food Vessels from the region. Vessels are squat with rim diameters greater than their heights

Table 8.8: *Principal Food Vessel forms from the North Highlands*

Regarding form, s-profile vessels are common in Sutherland, with short-necked Beakers preferred in Caithness. S-profile vessels typically had heights from 135–178mm, with rim diameters of 112mm (based on the weak s-profile vessel from Cambusmore (NH9) (Table 8.7). The proportions of short-necked vessels closely overlapped, with heights of 147-194mm, and rim diameters of 130-157mm (Table 8.7). Variation in motifs were observed between the two regions, with infilled hexagons only found in Caithness, but the sample is too small to discern any meaningful patterning.

This is true of patterns in age and sex, where only 30% of the vessels had any age or sex data. S-profile vessels showed a general bias towards being placed with female burials, whilst short-necked vessels were associated with males, but given the limitations of the dataset these trends should be viewed cautiously. Beakers showed a general trend towards being associated with young adults, but this could reflect on average lifespans rather than a deliberate choice (see Walsh 2013). Given the limitations of the dataset it is not possible to state whether differences in morphology reflect on difference sin age or sex as in other parts of Scotland (Curtis & Wilkin *forthcoming.*). Whilst inhumation was the primary rite associated with vessels, the evidence from Chealamy (NH11) and Dornoch Nursery (NH15) indicate that these could have been complex, with remains being removed and added. 37% of the Beakers were associated with other artefact types, typically comprising items of equipment. These predominantly comprised flint tools, and arrowheads. The burial at Dornoch Nursery (NH15) featured the greatest range of grave goods, and, as discussed prior, the composition of the funerary assemblage links the burial to a wider network of 'archery burials' (*cf.* **Section 2.2**).

Food Vessels

Food Vessels are most commonly found in Sutherland, principally comprising grooved-shoulder vessels and double-cavetto zone vessels (Table 8.8). Double-cavetto vessels encompass an array of forms created through the manipulation of the cavetto zone. These are further categorised through different funerary practices. These include the double-cavetto examples from Loch More (NH23) and Embo (NH17), which were paralleled with vessels from Knockdoon and Luce Sands (Fig 8.36). Importantly, the similarity between the vessels could be deceptive, deriving from choices made in production. Whilst there was no evidence for the use of Food Vessels in domestic contexts, several rims from Freswick Sands (NH18) could derive from Food Vessels (Gibson, A. 1982: 158). More conclusive evidence for Food Vessels in a domestic context was recorded from Rosemarkie (SH45) to the south. In contrast to Beakers fewer motifs were employed, with the simple horizontal and diagonal line motifs

occurring frequently. Twisted cord was common occurring on 50% of the Food Vessels. In two cases twisted cord was paired with other decorative techniques.

Food Vessels were primarily categorised through their use in inhumation burials, evidence for their use in cremations was rare. Where Food Vessels were associated with cremations these tended to fall, as at Alt Na Fearna (NH5), after 2200 BC (Fig 8.39). The form, date and associations of the vessel connect it with a suite of similarly dated vessels, including those from Armadale (SH4). Food Vessels in inhumation burials did not show a preference for placement, but this information was limited as the bulk of the vessels were poorly documented. This is further paralleled in the use of other grave goods alongside ceramic. These accompaniments tended to take the form of a single object. Whilst vessels were predominantly associated with females, the number of sexed burials was small. The reoccurrence of necklaces could suggest a recurrent association between females, Food Vessels and necklaces. In this relationship, the vessel form is not recurrent, but variable. Similar articulations for males cannot be detected, but it is possible that males were buried with different assemblages that did not involve ceramics.

Bucket/ tub

These were predominantly recorded from domestic sites including, as discussed in **Chapter 5**, the Grooved Ware from Freswick Sands (NH18). Bucket/ tub vessels were also recorded from Alt Na Fearna (NH5) where such forms appeared to be long lived. In a funerary context, vessels appear to have been used at a later date in association with cremation practices although the vessel from Tulach an T'Sionnaich (NH30) could fall earlier.

8.6 Summary & Conclusions

In this chapter I have reviewed the ceramic data from across the North Highlands. Data from the region was biased towards funerary finds, with domestic finds restricted to two sites. In the analysis of the domestic material in the first part of this review, the possible presence of Beaker and Food Vessel elements were noted at Freswick Sands (NH18). Problems of stratigraphy and the fragmentary nature of the pottery prohibit a more detailed analysis. In the second half I reviewed the funerary data, highlighting current gaps and limitations within the dataset. Despite the limitations of the dataset clear differences and connections within the region can be detected. Notable is the predominance of Food Vessels north of the Dornoch

Firth and along the Golspie coast. These comprise a range of double-cavetto zone vessels and more rarely bowls. Food Vessels are less common in Caithness, but the two vessels from Cnoc na Ciste (NH12) and Sandhills (NH27) share features in common with vessels from Sutherland, including the apparent association with female burials. Male burials were limited being associated primarily with short-necked Beakers. These in contrast to the distribution of Food Vessels were primarily located in Caithness. The number of male burials overall was limited in comparison to female burials. The general scarcity of male burials is striking but could be accounted for either by gaps in the dataset, or that males were associated with alternative grave goods. This could include organic grave goods which have not survived. Based on the limited dating evidence it seems that Beakers are uncommon by the time Food Vessels are in use. This suggests fluid changes in the wider assemblages in which pots were used. These changes could include different external influences and possible changes in ideas concerning the most appropriate type of vessel for use in funerary rites. One further point is that whilst low-carinated Beakers have been recorded, there is no evidence to suggest that later Beaker types are directly connected to these. Instead it is possible that the emergence of short-necked and s-profile types is connected to other influences. Given the current gaps in dating and distribution, - especially regarding the region before the inception of Beakers - it is difficult to analyse these trends in further detail. In the next chapter I will examine the final study area, the South Highlands, where a range of distinctive Beaker types are recorded.

CHAPTER NINE
THE SOUTH HIGHLANDS

9.1 Introduction

Fifty-three sites were recorded from the South Highlands. 75% of the recorded sites were funerary in nature. Funerary sites were principally located north of Loch Ness in the Inverness region (Fig. 9.1). Multiple Beakers have been recorded from the Cawdor region but the provenance of several of these is unclear (**App. E3**, **Section 9.3.2**) To the north of this cluster is a further group centred around the Black Isle and north of the Cromarty Firth. Several further finds were recorded from Skye and around Loch Maree (Fig. 9.1). The distribution of the six recorded domestic sites closely overlapped with the funerary finds. These were located around the Inverness area, with a cluster of sites on the west coast, centred on Skye and the Ardnamurchan region (Fig. 9.2). A single domestic site was recorded from Ross and Cromarty at Rosskeen East (SH46). A further domestic site was recorded from Inverness, comprising the anthropogenic spreads and pits from Culduthel Farm Phase 7 & 8 (SH17). Further probable domestic sites, including the cave deposits at Rudh an Dunain (SH47) were recorded from Skye. In addition, five non-funerary assemblages were recorded from chambered cairns, concentrated in Ross and Cromarty and Skye (Fig. 9.1).

9.2 Domestic Sites

9.2.1 Nature of the evidence

Domestic sites from the region predominantly comprised anthropogenic spread and pits (Table 9.1) (**App. A4.1**). The function of these is uncertain and could relate to non-domestic activity (*cf.* S**ection 2.5.1**). At Kiltaraglen (SH35) a panoply of features dating to the 2nd and 1st millennium BC were excavated including a series of pits (Suddaby 2013). Sherds of Beakers and other pottery were recovered from two pits located *c.* 50m apart, F134 and F168 (Fig. 9.3). These formed one element of a panoply of features. F134 could have formed part of a curving alignment of eight or nine undated features (Fig. 9.3). F168 aligned north/ south, was open for

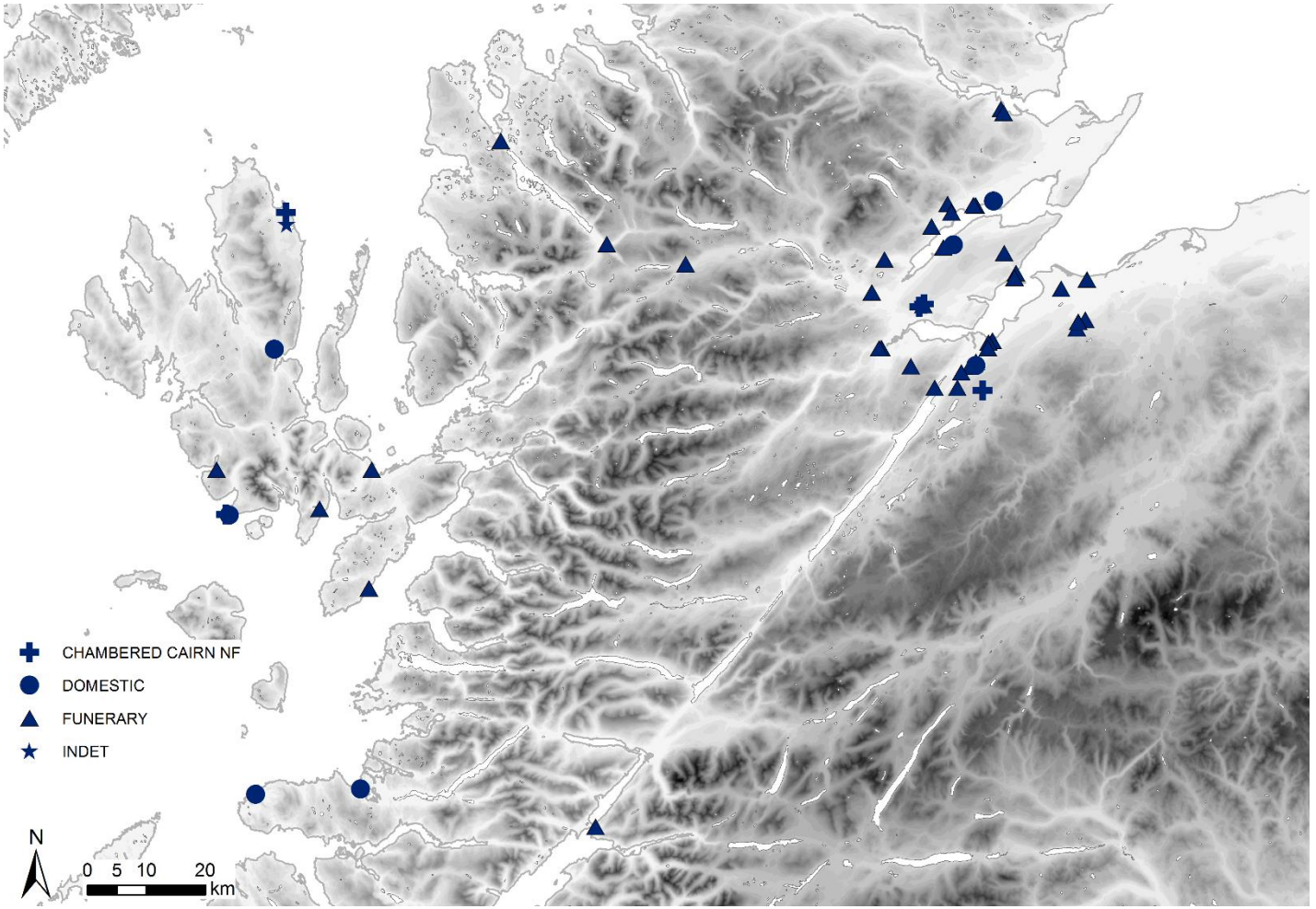

Figure 9.1: *Distribution of sites in the South Highlands discussed in text*

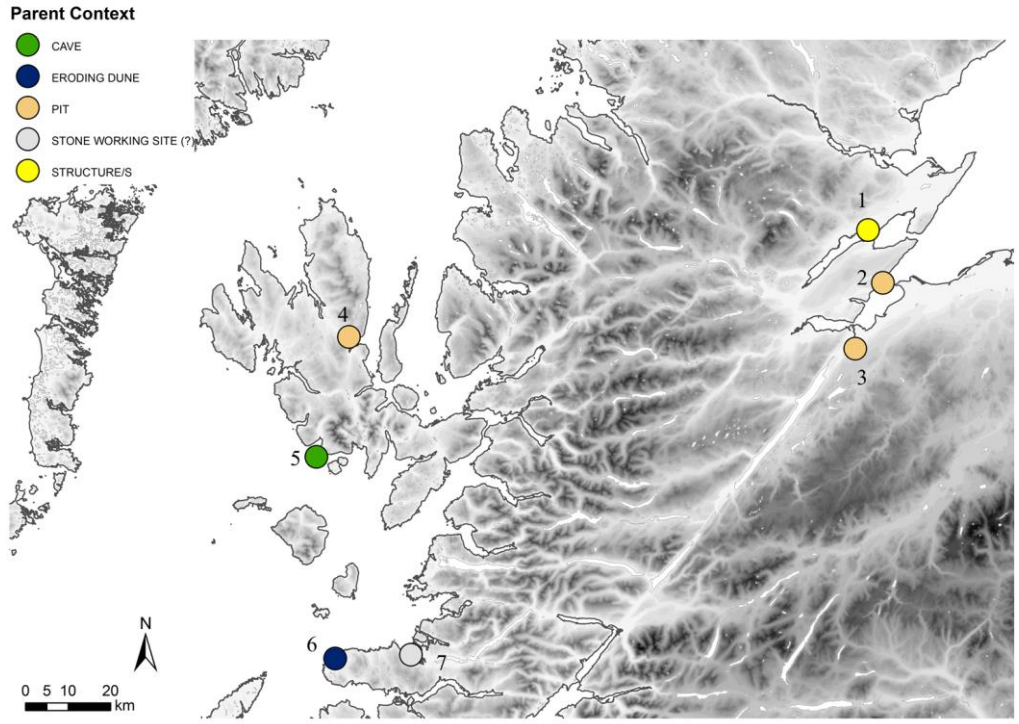

Figure 9.2: *Distribution of principal domestic sites within the South Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *Rosskeen E. Context 23 (SH46), Ross & Cromarty,* ***2.*** *Rosemarkie (SH45), Ross & Cromarty, 3. Culduthel Farm, Phase 7 & 8 (SH17), Inverness-shire* ***4.*** *Kiltaraglen (SH35), Inverness-shire,* ***5.*** *Rudh an Dunain (SH47), Inverness-shire* ***6.*** *Ardnamurchan, Sanna Bay (SH3), Argyll,* ***7.*** *Ardnamurchan, Cul na Croise (SH2), Argyll*

Site	Code	Parent Context/ Sub-context	Reference
Rosskeen E. Context 23	SH46	?Structures?	Wordsworth 1993a, 1993b, 1993c
Ardnamurchan, Cul Na Croise	SH2	Stone working site/ midden spread	Lethbridge 1927; Gibson, A. 1982; Ritchie, J.N.G. 1973
Kiltaraglen	SH35	Pits	Suddaby 2007
Ardnamurchan, Sanna Bay	SH3	Eroding dune/ Midden spread	Lethbridge 1927; Gibson, A. 1982; Ritchie, J.N.G. 1973
Culduthel Farm Phase 7 & 8	SH17	Pits	Murray, R. 2008
Rudh' An Dunain	SH47	Cave	Scott, W. 1934
Rosemarkie	SH45	Pits	Fraser 2014

Table 9.1: *Principal domestic sites discussed in text (see* ***App. H1*** *for defintion of parent contexts)*

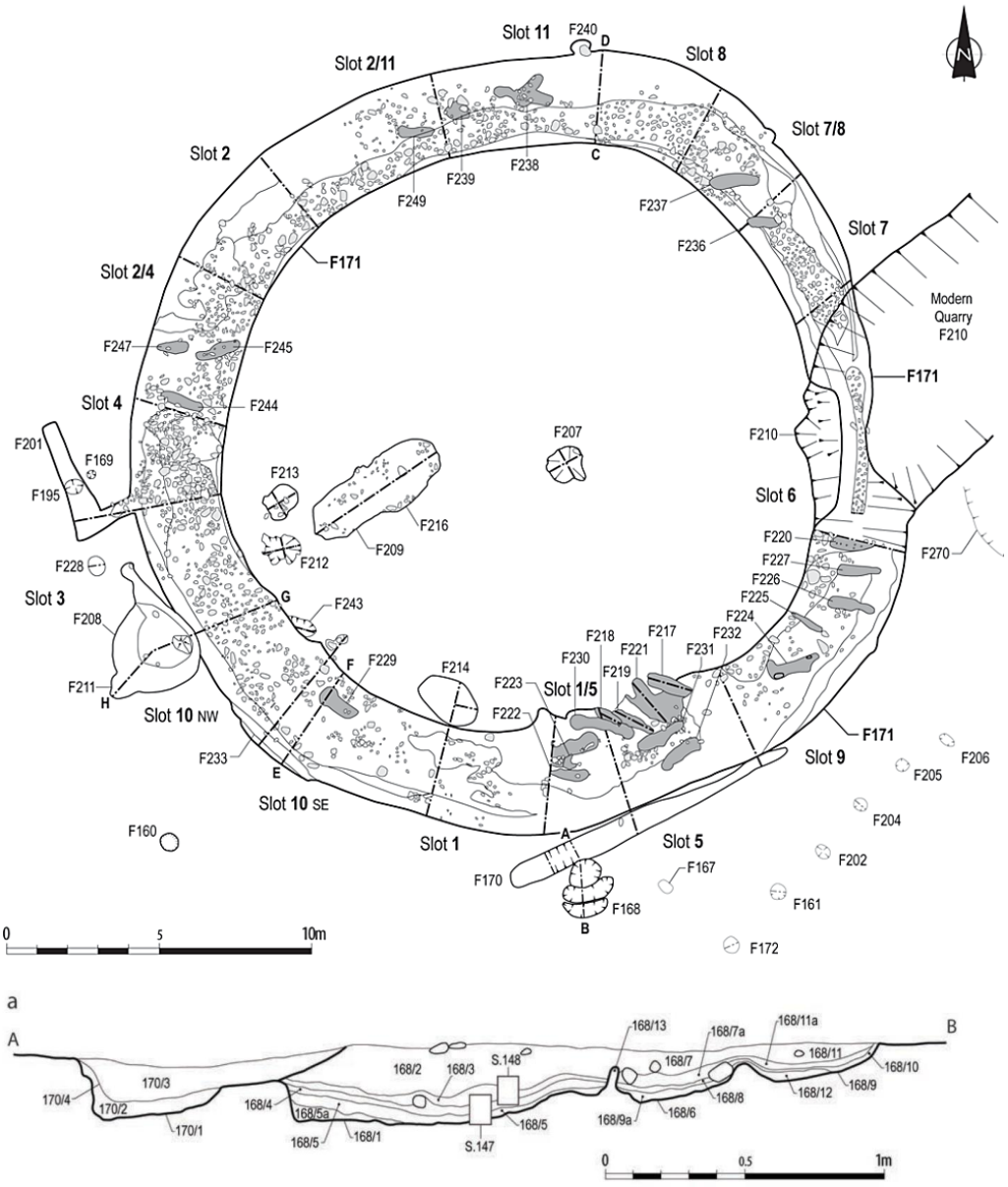

Figure 9.3: *Main enclosure F171 and Pit F168 at Kiltaraglen (SH35), Inverness-shire (Suddaby 2013)*

a period and filled in a single episode (*ibid.*: 10). Alongside the ceramic and lithic finds, large quantities of charcoal were noted (*ibid.*: 36). The function of F168 is uncertain but is likely non-funerary in nature (Suddaby 2013: 54)[1]. Evidence for funerary activity came from a disturbed cremation in the stony fill of the large enclosure F171, dated to a similar time frame as the pits, but the precise relationship is not known (see below). At Rosemarkie (SH45) a series of pits were excavated including examples dated to the early 3rd millennium (**Section**

[1] *Phosphate analysis of the pit did not detect traces of decayed human remains (Suddaby 2013: 10)*

Group 1 (G1)	Two small structures	Structure 1 is likely a small round house of 3rd millennium date, the second feature is undated
Group 2 (G2)	Mixed range of deposits	Pits, tree throws and spreads of anthropogenic material

Table 9.2: *Features at Culduthel Farm, Phase 7 & 8 (SH17), Inverness-shire (Murray, R. 2008)*

5.5.1). Pits dated to the early 2nd millennium include F23, F26, F30 and F32. F23 was formed of two connected pits. Within the upper layer fragments of unidentified bone, burnt flint and pottery were recovered. The fills are dated to 1890-1616 cal BC (Fraser 2014: 8). The remaining pits (F23, F30, 32) lay in a cluster at the southwest end of the excavation. Within this group were the remains of F25, interpreted as a grain drying kiln. From each of these features a range of pottery, including Beaker and Food Vessel sherds were recovered. To the northeast of F25 were a small cluster of urned and unurned cremations, including examples of Cordoned Urns (*ibid.*).

Ephemeral structural remains were noted at Rosskeen East (SH46) during a large scale commercial project (Wordsworth 1993a, 1993b, 1993c). The structure comprised a probable hearth and a series of posts and gullies[2] defining an area of 8m in diameter (Fig. 9.4). Most of the features from the Phase 7 & 8 work at Culduthel Farm (SH17), covering an area of *c.* 5.3 hectares, represent probable prehistoric settlement activity. This activity took the form of post-built roundhouses, a cremation burial with associated post settings and a further area of settlement activity comprising two roundhouses and over a hundred pits (Murray, R. 2008) (Table 9.2).

In additon to these pit finds, late 3rd millennium pottery has been recorded from the coastal midden sites at Sanna Bay (SH3) and Cul na Croise (SH2) in the former Lochaber district (Lethbridge 1925: 106, 1927: 173; Ritchie, J.N.G. 1973: 51-2). The nature of activity at these sites, as noted in the case of Freswick Sands (NH18), is unclear. The final site included

[2] *The gullies could have acted as slots for timbers rather than drainage, suggesting the presence of a timber structure at the site (Wordsworth 1993a, 1993c)*

Figure 9.4: *S-profile Beaker from Sanna Bay (SH3), Inverness-shire (© CMAE)*

Figure 9.5: *Cord and shell impressed sherds from Sanna Bay (SH3), Inverness-shire (© CMAE)*

in this section is the assemblage from the lowest level in the cave at Rudh an Dunain (SH47) (Scott, W. 1934b: 201).

9.2.2 Sanna Bay & Cul na Croise (SH2, SH3)

The Assemblage

The pottery was catalogued by Ritchie in the early 1970s, and the following discussion is based on these descriptions (Ritchie, J.N.G. 1973: 51-2)[3]. At least six vessels are present in the Sanna Bay (SH3) assemblage. This includes a fragmentary s-profile Beaker (CMAE 1926.502), with a rounded belly at the midpoint of the vessel. The rim diameter measures 150mm (Ritchie, J.N.G. 1973: 52). The exterior is decorated with multiple horizontal all-over (AO) cord impressions (Fig. 9.4). Assigned the same accession number are several cord and shell impressed sherds (Figs. 9.5 & 9.6). The precise form of these is unclear but could include other low-carinated or s-profile vessels. Intermixed with the collection of comb impressed sherds at Cul na Croise (SH2) are several granite-gritted sherds (Ritchie, J.N.G. 1973: 52), but the relationship of these to the decorated pottery is unclear (Fig. 9.7).

Discussion

The composition of the assemblages from Sanna Bay (SH3) and Cul na Croise (SH2) is comparable to other sand dune sites including Luce Sands (**Section 2.5.2**). Pottery from Luce Sands shows a similar preference for all over cord impressions (Fig. 2.28). Stylistically these vessels could be of an early date, but low-carinated and s-profile forms can be relatively long-lived, and all over impressions can occur in later contexts (Needham 2012: 9). Parallels can be drawn to AOC material recorded from the Hebrides including Coll, where sherds of coarse wares were also recorded (Fig. 2.24). As at Sanna Bay (SH3) and Cul na Croise (SH2), the precise chronology of these coarse sherds is unclear, as is their relationship to the all-over cord (AOC) Beaker from the pit burial (**Section 2.5.2**). If an early date is accepted for the material from the Ardnamurchan peninsula then this could indicate that the region played a key role in the distribution of Beaker pottery and ideas during the late 3rd millennium, connecting the Irish Sea and west coast of Scotland.

[3] *This information is supplemented by information provided by Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology where material from the Ardnamurchan sites (SH2, SH3) is currently housed (I. Gunn pers. comm.).*

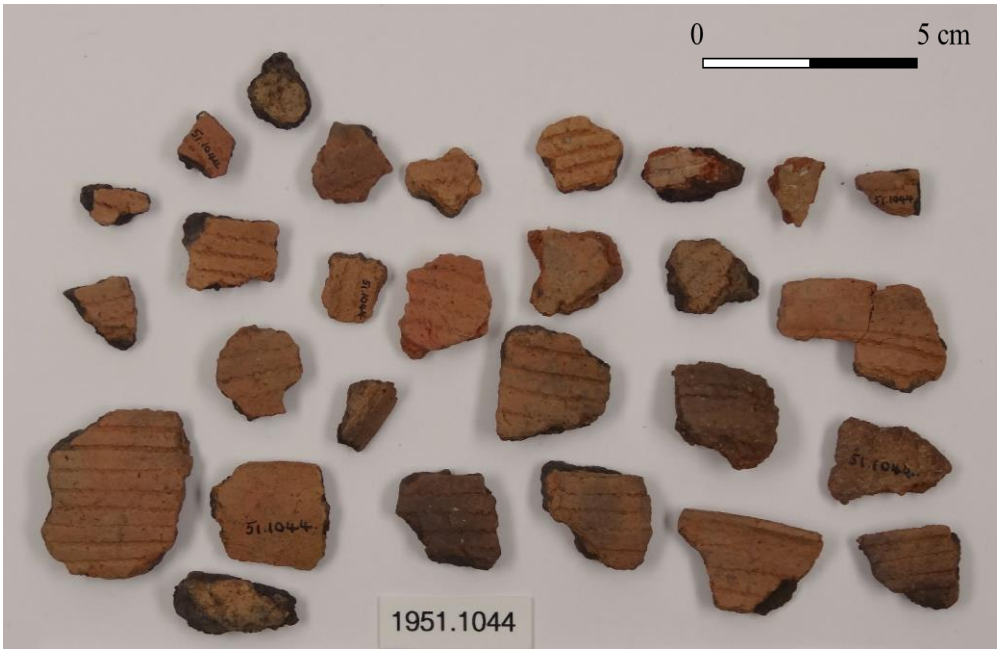

Figure 9.6: *Additional decorated sherds from Sanna Bay (SH3), Inverness-shire (© CMAE)*

Figure 9.7: *Decorated and coarse sherds from Cul na Croise (SH2), Inverness-shire (© CMAE)*

9.2.3 Kiltaraglen (SH35)

The Assemblage

At Kiltaraglen (SH35) 112 sherds representing 39 different vessels were recovered from the fills of Pit F168. Most of the vessels are represented by one or two sherds, preventing full analysis of forms (Johnson, M. 2013: 35). The rim sherds P50 and P49 belong to narrow

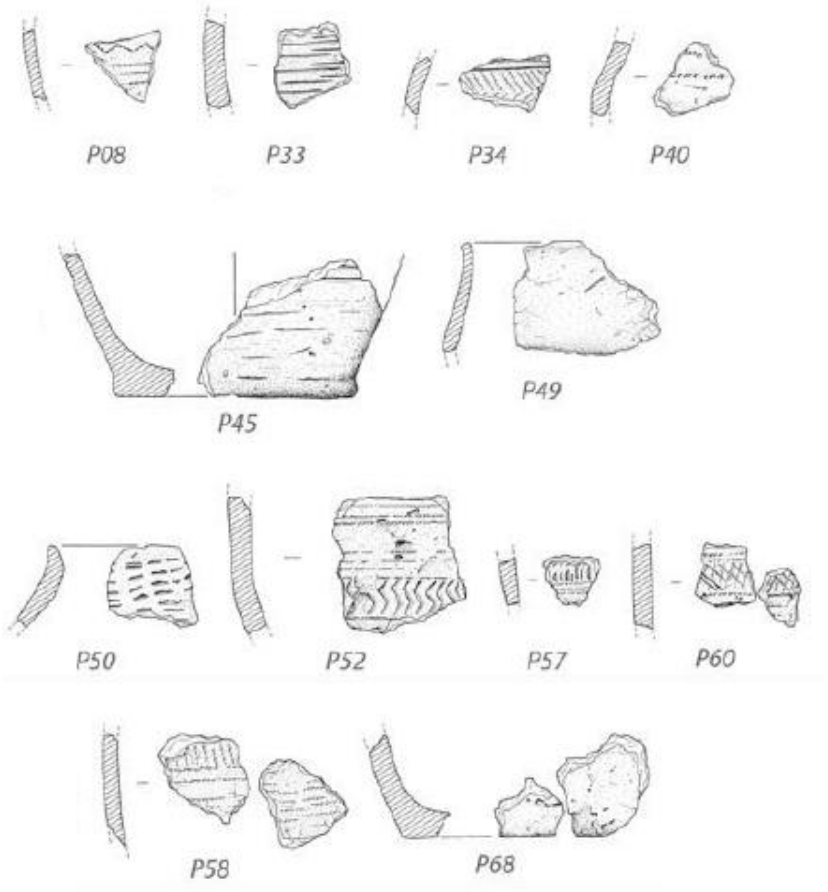

Figure 9.8: *Pottery from Kiltaraglen (SH35), Inverness-shire (after Suddaby 2013: Illus 28)*

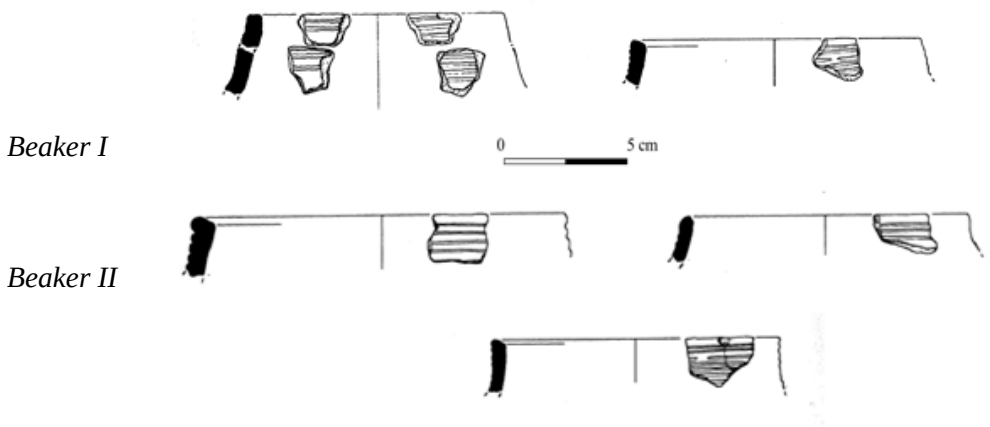

Figure 9.9: *Narrow mouthed jars from Northton, Harris (for details of phasing see **Section 2.5.2**) (after Simpson, D. et al. 2006: Figure 3.32 & 3.11)*

mouthed/ closed jars (Fig. 9.8). Little remained of both vessels to reconstruct profiles, but one possibility is that they were shouldered vases akin to shouldered/ cavetto forms, or the jars from Kilellan Farm (Fig. 2.38). Similar closed mouthed vessels with rim dimeters of 140-180mm, are documented from the Beaker I and II horizons at Northton (Fig. 9.9). As at Northton cord or comb impressions along with incision were common, with sherds typically sporting parallel lines of cord or comb motif (*ibid.*) (Fig. 9.8). More complex patterns were present on several larger sherds, including lattice patterns and z/s shapes (Fig. 9.8). Several of the motifs find parallel at other sites in Skye, including Elishader (SH36), Cadha Riach (SH11) and the cave site of Rudh an Dunain (SH47).

Discussion

The nature of the deposits at Kiltaraglen (SH35) is difficult to interpret, as noted by the excavators it is unclear if the evidence represents ritual or domestic activity. The composition of the material from the pits echoes the Type III pits from Kintore, which were classed as typical Neolithic pits (Table 2.7). It is possible that some of the pottery could relate to the disturbed cremation burial from Slot 3, dated to *c.* 2000 cal BC (Suddaby 2013: 12; Johnson, M. 2013: 36). Cremation burials in association with Beaker burials are not unknown. At the

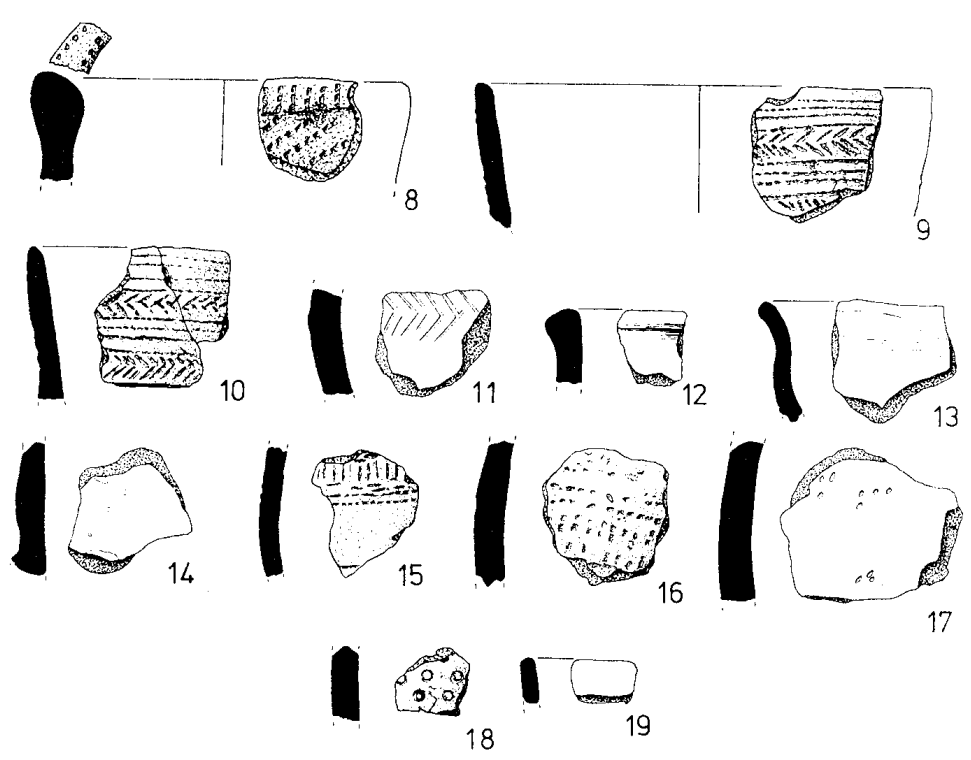

Figure 9.10: *Pottery from Rudh an Dunain (SH47), Inverness-shire (Gibson, A. 1982: 487)*

nearby site of Cnocan na Gobhar (SH14) a probable cremation was recorded in association with a Beaker (Callander 1928). Given the highly abraded nature of the assemblage reconstructing forms is difficult. Nonetheless parallels with vessels from Northton can be drawn. This includes the presence of similar forms including narrow mouthed storage jars. Chronologically both sites overlap with the pits at Kiltaraglen (SH35) dated to 2550 and 2200 cal BC (see below).

9.2.4 Rudh an Dunain (SH47)

The Assemblage

At Rudh an Dunain (SH47) eight vessels were recorded alongside sherds of Iron Age pottery (Scott, W. 1934b: 211-213). Among the vessels are fragments of probable Food Vessels decorated by comb or incision (Fig. 9.10) (Gibson, A. 1982: 233). The circular impressions on 18 are reminiscent of those on a 'cinerary urn' from Coll (Ritchie, J.N.G. *et al.* 1978: 95).

9.2.5 Culduthel Farm, Phase 7 & 8

From the Phase 7 & 8 contexts at Culduthel Farm (SH17) a range of Beaker and various coarse sherds are recorded. The assemblage numbers around 23 pots (Pots 44-66) (Sheridan unpub.). The pottery was recovered primarily from the fill of paleochannel 693 in Group 1 and under the roughly rectangular spread of material, context 571 and 652 (Table 9.3). These sherds probably represent two phases of activity, with the fill of the paleochannel preceding the material from spread 571 (Sheridan unpub.). The recovered material was heavily abraded, and probably redeposited. The spreads themselves could represent the residue of general activity within the area. The vessels are mostly thin walled, under 10mm thick (Sheridan unpub.). Several vessels are decorated with comb and cord impressions along with fingernail impressions (*ibid.*). One fine example, Pot 45, has a height of *c.* 150mm, and is decorated all over with a series of cord impressions. Two larger examples are noted among the assemblage, Pot 54 and 59, with rim diameters *c.*210-220mm. These could stem from large low-carinated or s-profile Beakers akin to those from Kilcoy South (SH34).

Discussion

As at Kiltaraglen (SH35) the abraded nature of the assemblage makes interpretation difficult. The presence of a range of all over ornamented Beakers echoes deposits found at other sites

Context	Pottery
G1 Paleochannel 693	• 46 AOC • 47 Rimsherd large vessel (Beaker?) estimated rim diameter: 280mm. Cordon below rim, decorated with thumbnail impressions
G2 Spread 571 and 652	• 52 'rusticated' • 53 'rusticated' • 54 estimated rim diameter: 220mm Beaker/ 'rusticated' • 55 COMB • 56 'rusticated' • 57 Low cordon on neck Beaker/ 'rusticated'? • 58 Beaker / COMB • 59 Rimsherds decorated with deep incised lines on exterior below rim. Estimated rim diameter: 210mm • 60 COMB • 61 • 62 COMB • 63 COMB • 64 • 65
Pit 551	• 44 CORD
Pit 500	• 66
Unstrat	• 45 AOC estimated rim diameter: 170mm • 48 CORD • 49 Undecorated rim sherd • 50 'rusticated' • 51 COMB

Table 9.3: *Distribution of sherds by context at Culduthel Farm Phase 7 & 8 (SH17) , Inverness-shire (Murray, R. 2008: Table 1)*

including Kilcoy South (SH34). This includes the presence of larger low-carinated/s-profile Beakers, probably employed in storage roles. These occur alongside smaller thin walled vessels. Given the poorly stratified nature of the assemblage it is unclear if the material represents one or several episodes of activity (**Section 9.2.8**).

9.2.6 Rosskeen East (SH46)

An assemblage of pottery comprising 30 fragments, representing around 7 vessels was recovered from the probable structure at Rosskeen East (SH46) (Fig. 9.11). Several of the sherds were decorated with comb impressions, alongside incision and twisted cord. One sherd sports a narrow band of diagonal decoration, whilst other sherds from context 23 sport a mixture of horizontal and diagonal impressions (Fig. 9.11). From the nearby site at Rosskeen

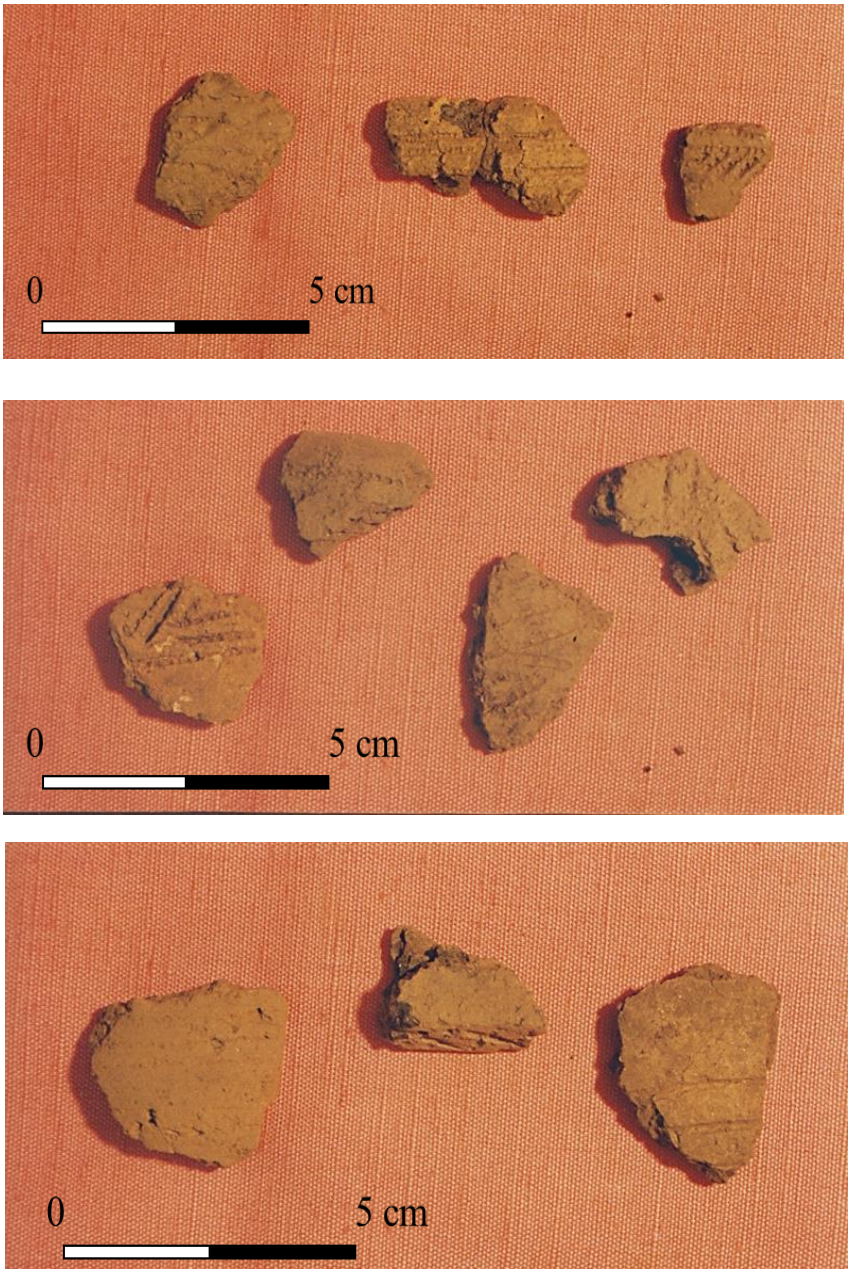

Figure 9.11: *Pottery from Rosskeen East (SH46), Ross & Cromarty (© J. Wordsworth)*

(NH 6886 6942) came a sherd described in the site archive as a Food Vessel, possibly in association with funerary activity (see **App. E1**).

Discussion

The small assemblage from Rosskeen (SH46) can be situated within the wider group of comb decorated Beakers from the South Highlands. Although small the sherds show a preference

for bands of comb impressed decoration including diagonal lines. Unfortunately, the precise form of these vessels is difficult to ascertain.

9.2.7 Rosemarkie (SH45)

The Assemblage

Around 19 Beakers were recovered from pits F16, 23,25, 26 and 35. At least four of the pots are all over cord decorated (Fig. 9.12). The exteriors of the vessels were decorated with

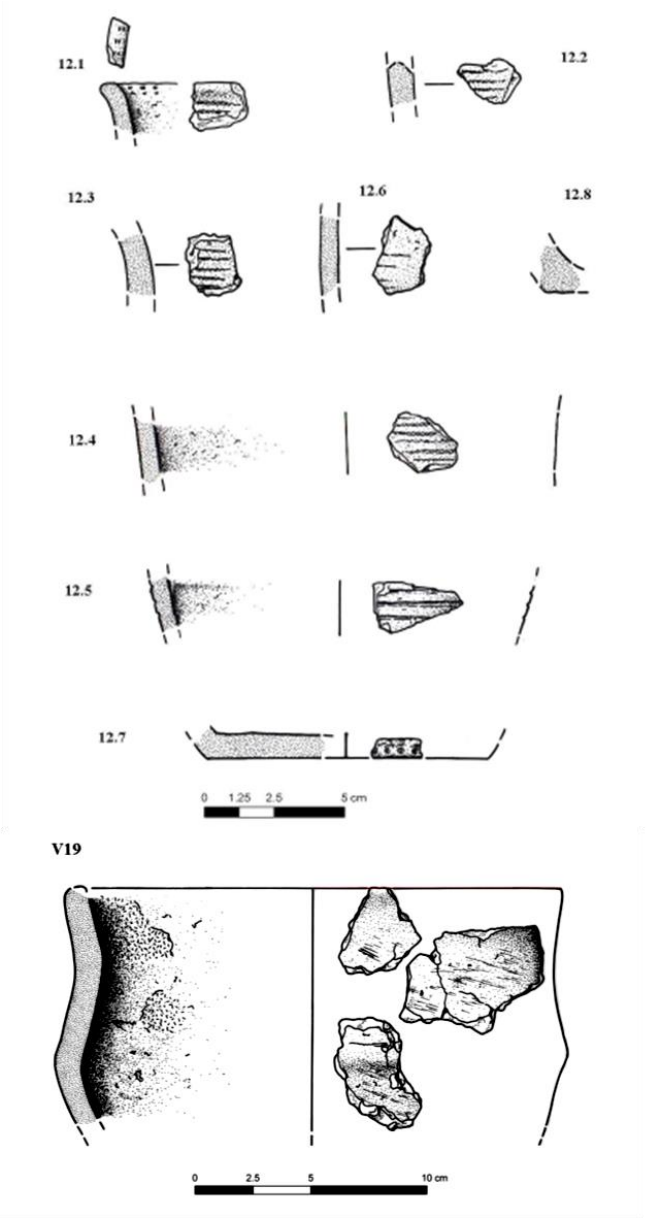

Figure 9.12: *Beaker pottery (top) and Food Vessel (bottom) from Rosemarkie (SH45), Ross & Cromarty (Fraser 2014: Illus 12, 14)*

horizontal lines of fine twisted cord impressions. The assemblage lacks the thicker walled vessels recorded at Culduthel Farm (SH17). Vessel thickness was on average 5-10mm, with vessels built up using flattened strips of clay (Sheridan 2014: 24). In several cases the vessels had broken along these sloping planes. The exteriors of the vessels were slipped or wet smoothed.

In addition to the Beaker vessels sherds of probable Food Vessels were recovered from F32 and F30. Pot 20 from pit F30 is decorated with a relatively large square toothed comb, but the form of the vessel is unclear. Pot 19 from pit F32 is undecorated but has as shouldered profile and slightly everted rim (Fig. 9.12), recalling the examples from Sligeanach and Kilellan Farm (Figs 2.36 & 2.37). The interior of Pot 19 was encrusted with traces of black burnt on residue suggesting it had been employed as a cooking vessel, (Sheridan 2014: 27).

Discussion

All over decorated vessels have been recorded from other sites in the Black Isle, including Kilcoy South (SH34) and Kinbeachie Farm (SH36). The assemblage from Rosemarkie (SH45) can be fitted within a wider network of all-over decorated vessels from domestic sites, including Culduthel Farm (SH17) and the Ardnamurchan peninsula (SH2, SH3). The

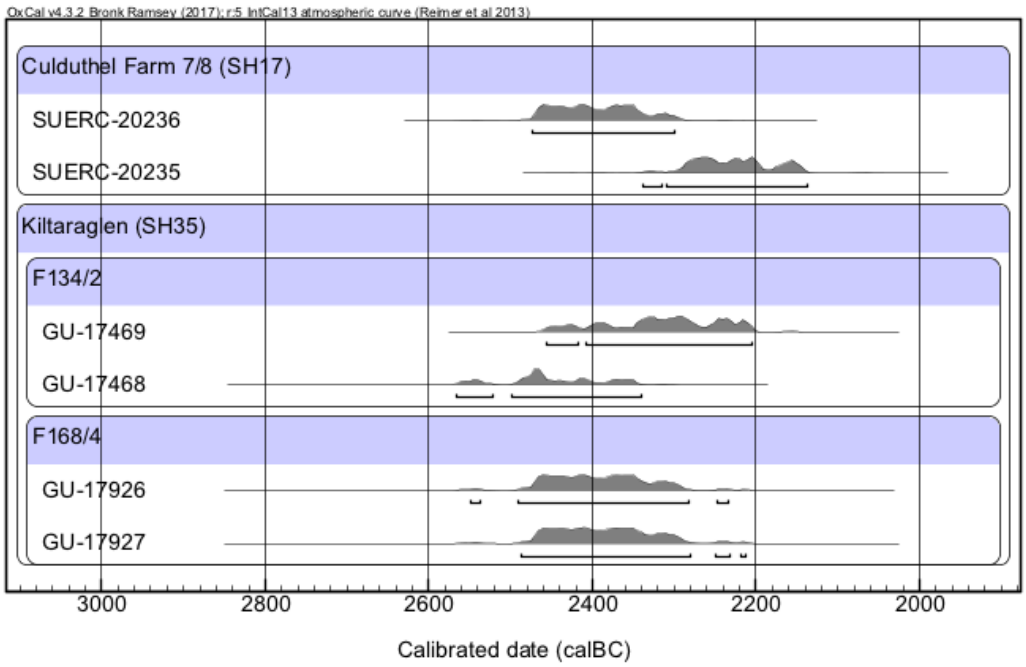

Figure 9.13: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates from domestic sites in the South Highlands (see **App. F4** for details)*

Site	Assemblage Condition	Key Forms
Rosskeen E. Context 23 (SH46)	Fragmentary, abraded ENV: Unk	• No forms attributable. Thin walled, COMB/ NCD decorated sherds • Coarse 'urn' sherds
Ardnamurchan **Cul Na Croise (SH2)**	Fragmentary, unstratified ENV: 3	• single AOC decorated sherd • several coarse granite gritted sherds, but relationship to decorated sherds unknown
Ardnamurchan **Sanna Bay (SH3)**	Fragmentary, one near complete vessel ENV: 6 + (exact number unknown)	• S-profile Beaker/ AOCo vessels • 25 sherds of AOC 'type' • Selection of other AOC sherds including three rims • Shell and COMB decorated sherds
Kiltaraglen (SH35)	Fragmentary, most vessels represented by two sherds ENV: 36/ 39	• Range of types, whilst sinuous/ carinated sherds are present, too fragmentary to determine form • Narrow mouthed 'jars' • Base of other 'jars'/ 'vases' • Decorative techniques and motifs overlap with funerary types • COMB, TWCI, NCD
Culduthel Farm **Phase 7 & 8 (SH17)**	Fragmentary, abraded ENV: 23	• Small abraded sherds, no forms identifiable • Fine fabrics common • Range of decorative techniques used, AOO (TWCI or COMB), AOC, NCD, FND ('rusticated')
Rudh' An Dunain (SH47)	Fragmentary, abraded	• Comb impressed sherds • Misc. forms likely Beakers and Food Vessels
Rosemarkie (SH45)	Fragmentary, abraded	• AO decorated Beakers • Undecorated/ decorated Food Vessels

Table 9.4: *Summary of domestic assemblages from the South Highlands*

available dates for the Beakers are uninformative, as none of the dates seem to date the activity associated with the deposition of the Beakers (Sheridan 2014: 33). In general, the assemblage was highly abraded suggesting it had lain exposed for a period before being deposited (Fraser 2014: 64). The presence of Food Vessels in a domestic site is not unusual, having been recorded at several other sites in Britain and Ireland (**Section 2.5.2**) but tends to be limited. Probable Food Vessels were noted at Rudh an Dunain (SH46). Other examples include deeply bevelled rims, which were recorded from several sites in the study area (**Section 10.3.2**). Within the Black Isle Food Vessels have also been recorded from burials, including the nearby single find from Rosemarkie (SH46) and Ness Gap (SH40). The dates from this vessel fit within the broader currency of Food Vessels within Scotland, dating to 2030-1780 cal BC.

9.2.8 Associations & Depositional Treatment

Owing to the poorly stratified nature of the pottery interpretation of roles is dependent, as in previous chapters, on a critique of form. At several sites vessels were involved in structured deposition, but the nature and significance of these anthropogenic deposits is hard to determine. The finds from F168 at Kiltaraglen (SH35) were associated with a collection of mudstone lithics, and charcoal (Suddaby 2003:10). The finds from the spreads and paleochannel at Culduthel Farm (SH17) comprised a similar mix of flints and pot sherds, with charcoal. The pits in Group 2 had evidence for *in situ* burning but did not appear to form a coherent group (Murray, R. 2008: 11). The fill of Pit 500 contained abundant charcoal and burnt bone flecks. The degree of association between Pot 66 and this deposit is unclear, as the data-structure report states that the sherds were found atop this deposit (Murray, R. 2008). As noted the abraded nature of the pottery suggests that it has been redeposited. In the case of the pottery from 571, the finds could have accumulated in a natural hollow (Sheridan unpub). Patches of organic residue suggest that these vessels could originally have been employed as cooking vessels (*ibid.*). Organic residue on the Food Vessel from Rosemarkie (SH45) suggests a similar role. The Beaker sherds from the site were heavily abraded and had become mixed into earlier deposits (see above). The temporal relationship between the Beaker and Food Vessel elements on site is unclear, but it is probable they represent different phases of use (Fraser 2014: 63).

With the remaining sites information regarding deposition and context is restricted, the pottery from Rudh an Dunain (SH47) was associated with stone working in the lower levels (Scott,

W. 1934b: 203)[4]. As discussed by Gibson, whether material placed in caves equates to occupation refuse, with a possible 'ritual' component, is unclear (1982: 38). Finds of Beaker pottery in cave sites is rare, but not unusual with examples recorded from Ireland (Carlin: 2011 203), the Mendip caves, and examples from Derbyshire and Yorkshire (Gibson, A. 1982: 39).

9.2.9 Chronology

Only three of the sites have been dated scientifically (Fig. 9.13). At Culduthel Farm (SH17) the possibility of two phases of deposition has already been noted. The pottery from the paleochannel appears to be earlier than that of the spread, dating to 2480-2290 cal BC (SUERC-20236) (**App. F4**) (Fig. 9.13). The presence of low-carinated/ AOC vessels in the earlier of the deposits is consistent with the wider dating of low-carinated vessels (*cf.* **Section 2.2**). This could indicate an early domestic use of Beakers, although as discussed in **Chapter 2**, evidence for early Beaker use in domestic contexts overall is ambiguous. The fine AO decorated sherds from Rosemarkie (SH45) could fall within a similar time frame, but as noted these sherds are noted directly dated. The 'rusticated' vessels (Pots 52-54, 56, and ?57?) fall later with the mixed material from the spread dating to 2340-2130 cal BC (SUERC-20235) (**App. F4**). Dates from Kiltaraglen (SH35) present a wider range, within which it is difficult to precisely date the material (Fig. 9.13). Based on the morphology of the vessels it is probable that the vessels fall post-2300 cal BC, overlapping with the later phases of Culduthel Farm (SH17) *c.* 2300 BC and Northton Beaker I, 2200-1760 cal BC (Fig. 2.32). The Food Vessel from Rosemarkie (SH45) dated to 2030-1780 cal BC is the latest dated domestic assemblage from the area, representing a later phase of activity. Food Vessels from funerary contexts in the region closely overlap with this date, suggesting a general currency for Food Vessels from *c.* 2000 cal BC in the South Highlands (see Fig. 9.52).

9.2.10 Discussion: Domestic Assemblages, types and roles

In contrast to domestic sites from the Northern Isles the material from the South Highlands is predominantly small and highly abraded, hampering the attribution of form (Table 9.4). Assemblages tended to be small, the largest occurring at Kiltaraglen (SH35), comprising 36-39 vessels (Johnson, M. 2013: 35). As at Kiltaraglen (SH35) Beaker sherds were present at

[4] *Scott also excavated fragments of a Beaker from the nearby chambered cairn at Rudh an Dunain. The vessel was found broken and scattered in the north-west corner of the chamber (Scott, W. 1932: 198). The vessel is long-necked, divided into zones/ panels by incised decoration. The vertical borders on the neck and belly are marked out with a short comb impressed fringe. Currently held in the N.M.S.*

most sites, but the overall form of these was difficult to determine. In only two cases, Culduthel Farm (SH17) and Sanna Bay (SH3), were forms able to be assigned. Whilst Beakers are likely represented at most sites, other forms, including the narrow-mouthed jars from Kiltaraglen (SH35) are present. In the case of the latter these share some aspects, including decoration, in common with Beakers. These find parallel at other domestic sites of the period including Northton where narrow mouthed jars occur in the Beaker I & II phase (Fig. 9.9). The coarse wares from Cul na Croise (SH2) could, if contemporary with the AOC vessel, be indicative of an unrecognised domestic component akin to that noted at Alt Na Fearna (NH5) and Sorrisdale (Fig. 2.24). The relationships between the different sherds is unknown, and the possibility of the pottery belonging to earlier or later periods cannot be ruled out. Vessels 54 and 59 from Culduthel Farm (SH17) provide further evidence of the use of large Beakers in domestic contexts.

Moving from form to decoration comb impressions are common, with all over comb decorated vessels recorded at three sites (Table 9.3). Twisted cord was noted at several sites, including examples on small abraded sherds, to which no form could be assigned. Given the presence of twisted cord among pots from Culduthel and Old Police Headquarters (**Section 5.5**), the attribution of vessels to either ceramic group on the presence of this feature seems unwise, especially where sherds are small and highly abraded. Other factors including fabric need to be considered when assigning labels to such sherds. Motifs and techniques found in domestic

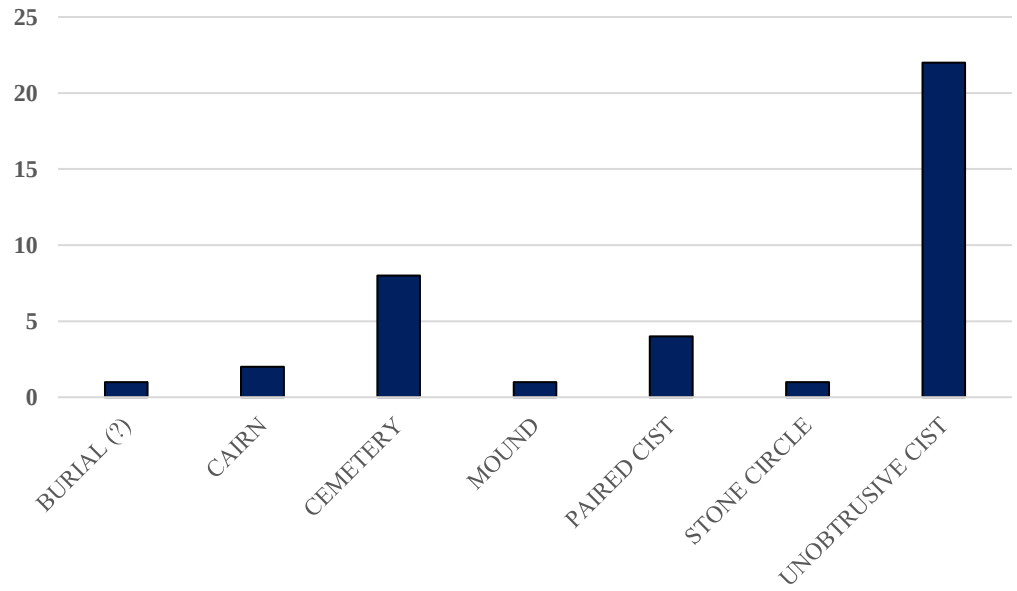

Figure 9.14: *Principal parent contexts associated with finds of pottery in the South Highlands (see **App. H2** for details of contexts)*

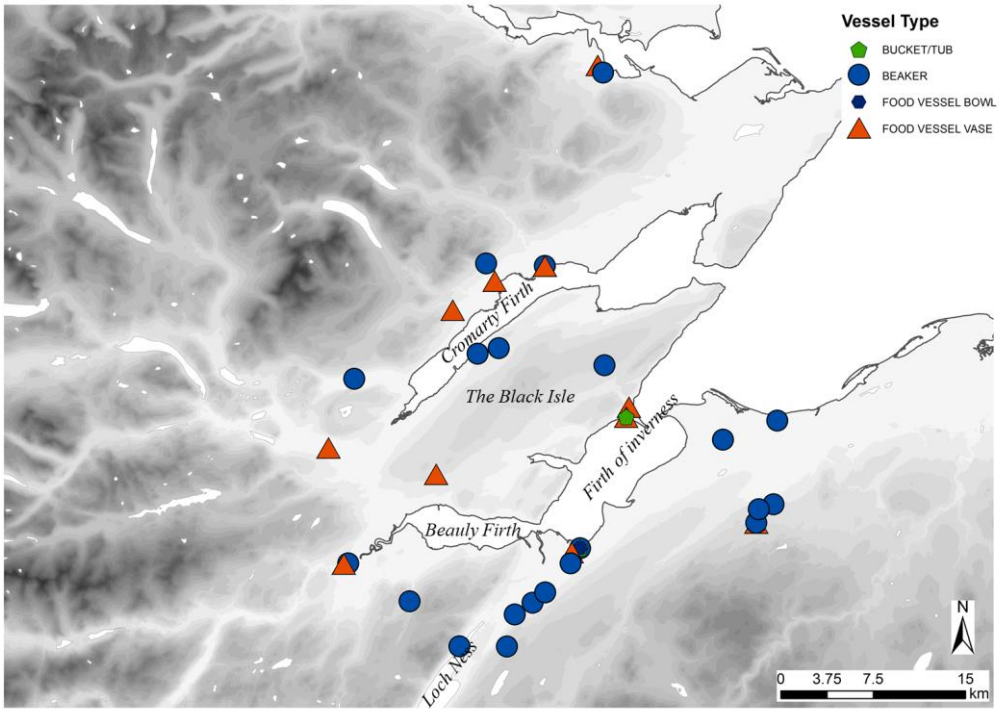

Figure 9.15: *Distribution of funerary finds between the Beauly Firth and Cromarty Firth*

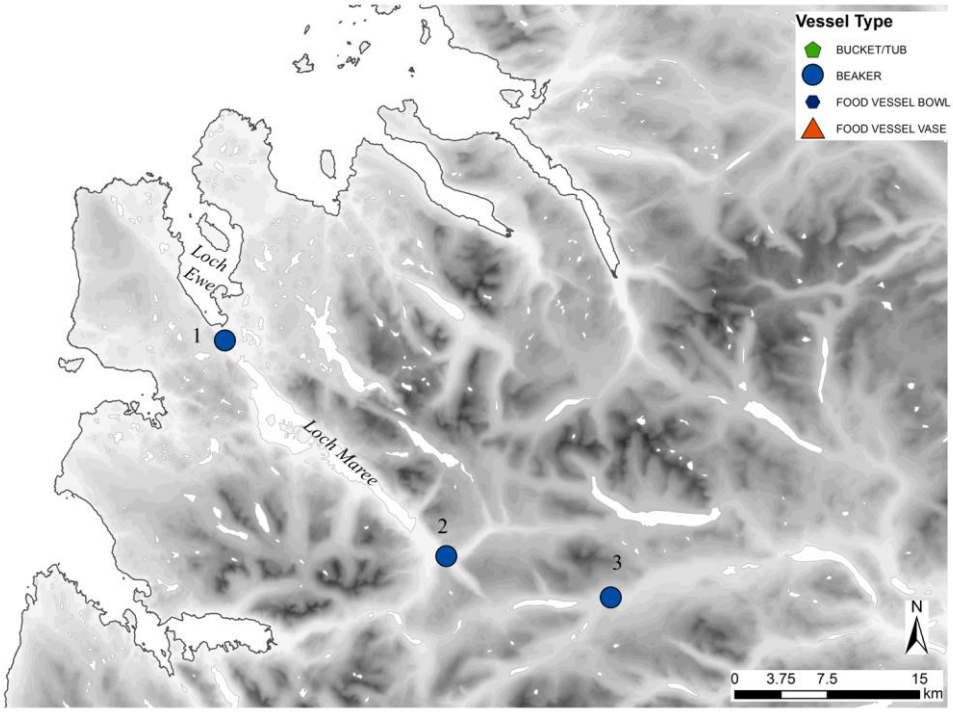

Figure 9.16: *Distribution of vessels from funerary contexts around Loch Maree:*

Key: ***1.*** *Poolewe (SH43)* ***2.*** *Bruachaig (SH10)* ***3.*** *Achnasheen (SH1)*

assemblages overlap in part with those found in funerary contexts, the relationship of which is examined further following the review of funerary material in the next section.

9.3 Funerary finds

9.3.1 Nature of the evidence

66 vessels were recorded from funerary contexts in the South Highlands, representing the largest collection of funerary material from across the study area (Fig. 1.5) (**App. A4.2**). A further 28 ceramic finds were identified, but not examined in detail owing to lack of information regarding vessel provenance and/ or the nature of the pottery (**App. E3**). Finds were predominantly recovered from unobtrusive cists and cemetery sites (Fig. 9.14). 60% of the vessels were Beakers, 40% of these were recorded from Ross and Cromarty. These were clustered around the Cromarty Firth, with a smaller group to the south around the Beauly Firth, accounting for the majority of funerary finds (Fig. 9.15). West of these a series of Beakers were recorded at Poolewe (SH43), Bruachaig (SH10), and Achnasheen (SH1) (Fig. 9.16). Only four examples of Beakers were recorded from Skye and Lochalsh. Food Vessel vases

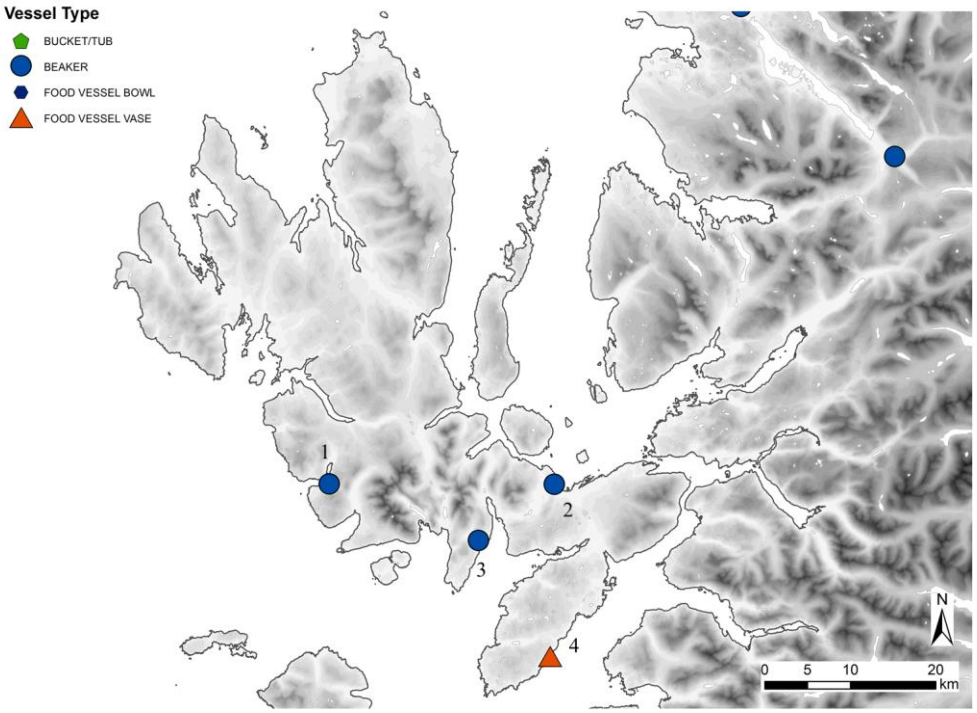

Figure 9.17: *Distribution of funerary finds in Skye:*

Key: ***1.*** *Coille Grulla (SH15),* ***2.*** *New Broadford (SH41),* ***3.*** *Cnocan Na Gobhar (SH14),*

and bowls were similarly underrepresented in Skye, with four examples from the cemetery site at Armadale (SH4) (Sheridan 2011b) (Fig. 9.15). Food Vessels were common in Ross and Cromarty, overlapping in part with the distribution of Beakers, with a cluster along the northern edge of the Cromarty Firth (Figs. 9.1 & 9.13). Bucket/ tub vessels are split between Ross and Cromarty and Inverness, often associated with other ceramic types, occurring in cemetery sites, including Seafield West (SH48), Ness Gap (SH40) and Raigmore (SH44). Among these are several examples of Cordoned Urns. These were centred on Inverness, with two further examples from Ross and Cromarty, including the vessel from Ness Gap (SH40). Among these are sherds from the upper part of a probable Cordoned Urn at Dalmore Farm (SH20) (Wood 2011: 29; Ballin Smith pers. comm.) (Fig. 9.55). The form and decoration of the vessel is comparable to Urn 2 from the Hill of Tuach, Kintore, Aberdeenshire (Bradley & Clarke 2016: figure 5.16). At least two Cordoned Urns were recorded from Kinsteary, Auldearn but the context is unknown (Walker 1964; S. Coupar pers. comm.) (see **App. E3**).
At the Dalmore (SH19) cemetery several vessels were recorded, including Food Vessels and an Encrusted Urn (Figs. 9.43 & 9.44). Clarke in his 1970 corpus attributes three Beakers to the site (1970: no.1745.1, 1746, 1747). These are not described in detail in the original excavation report (Table 9.5). The Beakers described by Clarke are not illustrated by Abercromby, or Anderson in his summary of the site. Indeed, the only vessel illustrated by Anderson is the distinct Encrusted Urn from Group 1, Grave 8 (1886: 49) (Fig. 9.48). In 1912 Abercromby illustrated two probable Food Vessels from Group 1, Grave 10 (**Section 9.3.3**). Further to this the Beakers do not appear in Mitchell-Crichton's corpus (1934). The finds from Dalmore (SH19) were held in Ardross Castle for a period and it is possible that there has been a degree of confusion or the Beakers relate to a different site in the Alness region. Jolly notes that a "*fine urn was found in a grave near Ardross Castle*", the vessel is described as "*well ornamented on its sid*es" (1879: 261). Considering this the provenance of these Beakers to the site is tentative and the possibility of mistaken attribution should be borne in mind.

9.3.2 Beakers

Thirty-nine vessels were recorded, centred on the Moray Firth (Fig. 9.15). Except for low-carinated Beakers all the principal nodal forms were represented. The multiple finds from the Cawdor region are included in this analysis. Walker recorded nine vessels, including the vessel

Grave Group/ Cist No.	Vessel Description (Jolly 1879)
Group 1, Grave 8	Large Food Vessel Urn "*It was 21 inches across at the rim, 5 inches across at the bottom, and 13 inches high. The rim was surrounded by a fine ornamental border, of unusually neat workmanship, showing a raised pattern which had been fastened on and not worked up from the surface of the urn. It has two or more holes perforating the border just under the rim*." (256-7)
Group 1, Grave 10	"*…two urns, large and small. The smaller, which was rather well formed contained nothing but gravel. Stood on its base without any covering. The larger…inverted in the usual way, contained nothing but burnt bones..."* (257)
Group 2, Grave 1	"*…an urn, inverted…firm and hard in material, ornamented with scratched lines*." (258)
Group 2, Grave 2	"*…an inverted urn…only slightly ornamented…*" (259)
Group 2, Grave 4	"*…a rough urn…*" (260)

Table 9.5: *Summary of vessels recorded by Jolly (1879) from Dalmore (SH19), Ross & Cromarty (cf. Fig. 9.43, 9.44)*

from Inchnacaorach (SH32), and a further three, then recent, discoveries from within the Cawdor region (1967: 100)[5] (Table 9.6, Fig. 9.18). Several of the finds recorded by Walker lacked direct provenance and there has likely been confusion with the finds from the cemetery at Auchindown (SH5) dug in the late 19th century (Callander 1933a: 232). In one of the cists a crouched inhumation was found with a probable Beaker and white pebble (MacAndrew 1885: 188). Five further Beakers were recorded from Nairn including, Princes Cairn, Tarradale (Crichton Mitchell 1934)[6] (Fig. 9.19) and Brahan Castle (Abercromby 1912: 85). In 1973 at Muirton Mains small friable fragments of a Beaker of uncertain type were recovered (D.E.S 1973: 4). These finds are further discussed in **Appendix E3**.

[5] *Whilst most of the finds from the Cawdor region appear to be Beakers Abercromby records a single Food Vessel measuring c.120mm tall. The vessel is decorated with a series of infilled chevrons underlined by a border of horizontal lines (no. 408)*

[6] *Recent survey work at Tarradale uncovered a single sherd of cord impressed pottery (E. Grant pers. comm.). The sherd was recovered close to an extensive multi-period barrow cemetery. From within the same district a sinuous vessel is reputed to have been recovered from a Tumulus PSAS 27: 358) (**App. E3**).*

1-3	Auchindown	Callander 1933a: 232 Bain 1893: 12, Clarke, D.L. 1970: no. 1727-1729 Crichton-Mitchell 1934: no. 240-242,
4-5	Same cist	Bain 1893: 12, Clarke, D.L. 1970 no 1722, 1723 Crichton-Mitchell 1934: no 243-244 Clarke, D.L. 1970: no.1722-1723
6-7	Same cist	Anderson & Black 1888: 352
8	No localities	Walker & Henshall 1968: Clarke, D.L. 1970: no. 1724-1726

Table 9.6: *Recorded Beakers from Cawdor (cf.* ***App. E1*** *for details)*

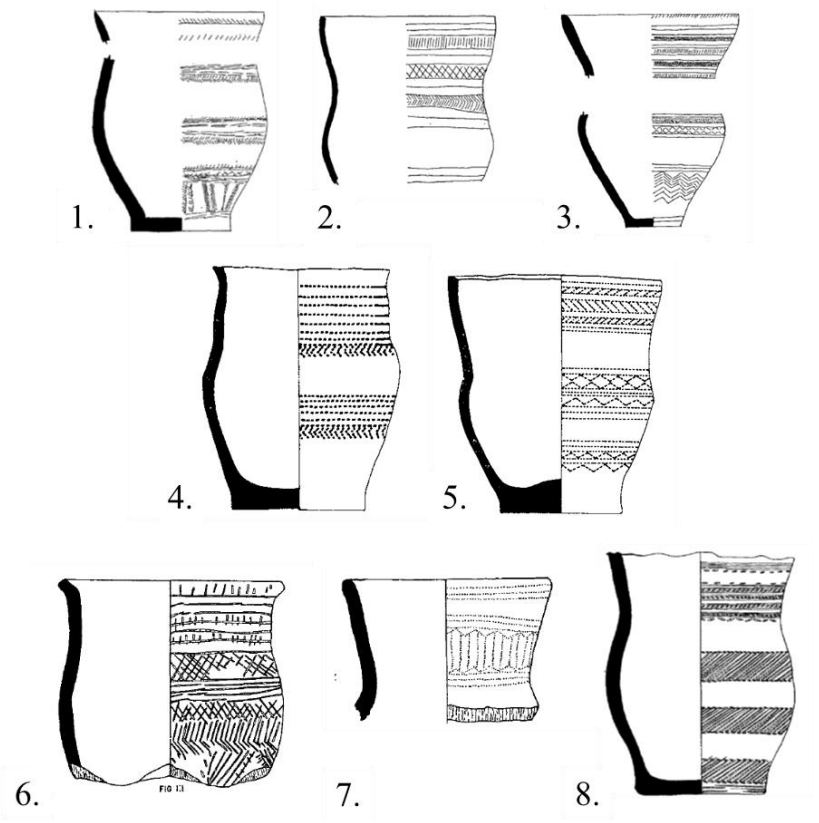

Figure 9.18: *Beakers from Cawdor (not to scale)*

Key: ***1.*** *Auchindown (Walker 1967: Fig 2. A),* ***2.*** *Auchindown (ibid.: 2. B),* ***3.*** *Auchindown (ibid.: 2C)* ***4.*** *Cawdor (Clarke, D.L. 1970: 1723),* ***5.*** *Cawdor (Clarke, D.L. 1970: 1722),* ***6-7.*** *Cawdor (Walker & Henshall 1968: Fig 1)*

Funerary Contexts

43% of the Beakers were found in short-cists in association with inhumation burials[7]. Whilst no direct evidence for cremation in association with Beakers was recorded, at Cnocan Nan Cobhar (SH14) a few fragments of "*incinerated*" bone was recorded (Callander 1928: 25). At Lochend (SH37) "*small fragments of charcoal and a burnt substance*" were recorded from under the body (Childe *et al.* 1944: 106). At New Broadford (SH41) fragments of burnt bone and charcoal were recovered from the upper fill of the cist but these could derive from later

Figure 9.19: *Sherd from Tarradale and vessel from Princess Cairn, Ross & Cromarty (© E. Grant)*

[7] *In the remaining 58% of examples bodies were either absent or no information was available.*

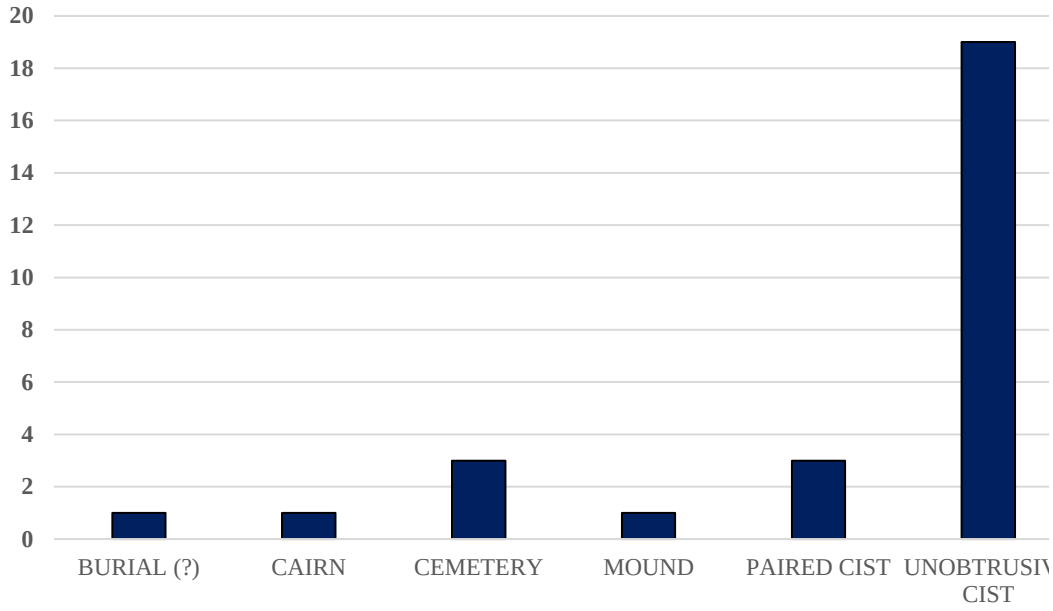

Figure 9.20: *Principal funerary contexts associated with Beakers in the South Highlands (see **App. H2** for details of contexts)*

disturbance (Birch 2012: 27). Sherds of a second AOC vessel were recovered from a destroyed cist near a grain drying kiln (*ibid.:* 45, 62).

38% of the cists were positioned on ridges, overlooking lochs or rivers, a further 25% were sited near the coast. In several cases cists were situated in areas with existing monuments. The bulk of the recorded cists occurred as single unobtrusive cists, but 25% of the Beakers were recovered from pairs of cists or set into wider cemeteries (Fig. 9.20). These cemeteries comprised a mix of vessels, with Beakers found alongside Food Vessels and bucket/ tub forms, including Cordoned Urns. At Corran Ferry (SH16) no further vessels were recorded from the second cist (Campbell, D. 1890), whilst at Bruachaig (SH10) other bodies in a "*doubled-up position*" were noted in the vicinity (Dixon 1886: 101).

The cists at Balblair (SH6), Corran Ferry (SH16) and Achnasheen (SH1) were set into natural gravel ridges or banks, whilst the cist at the Mains of Balnagowan (SH38) was placed into a sandy ridge (Shepherd, I. *et al.* 1985: 561). In two cases cists were sealed by stone cairns, but this number is likely unrepresentative, with mounds being vulnerable to ploughing. There is tentative evidence for mounds or kerbs as at South Clunes (SH46) (Low 1934: 128). The cist at Cnocan Na Gobhar (SH14) was set into an older cairn, probably the remains of a chambered cairn (Henshall 1972: 483). The five cists at Glebe, Eddertoun (SH30) were set into a D-shaped cairn (Joass 1870: 268) (Fig. 9.19). This is the only recorded instance of a Beaker placed into

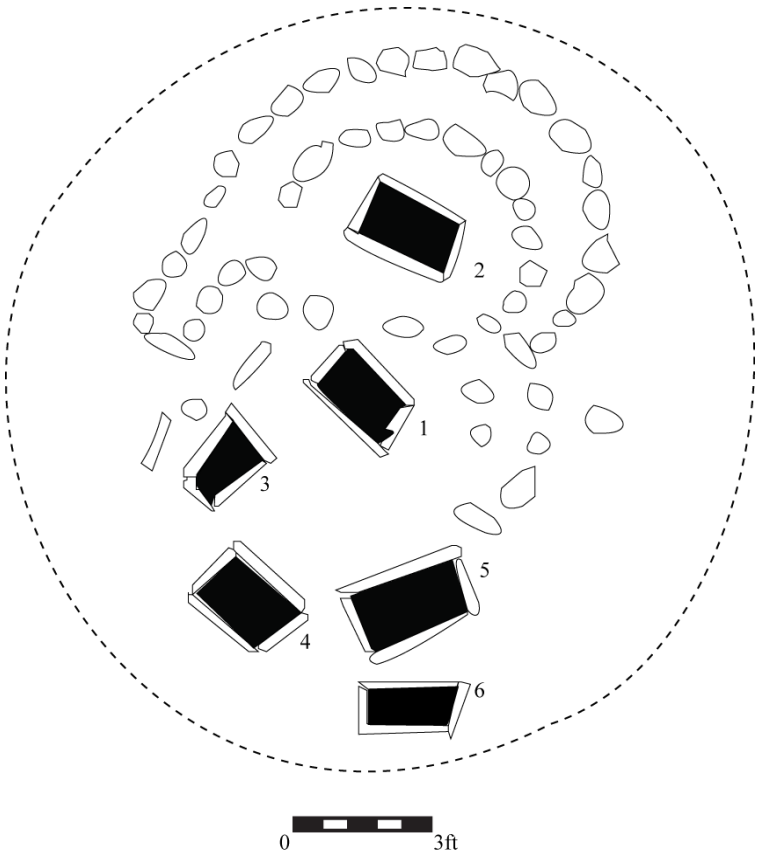

Figure 9.21: *Plan of burial monument at Glebe Eddertoun (SH30), Ross & Cromarty (after Joass 1870: Fig. 1)*

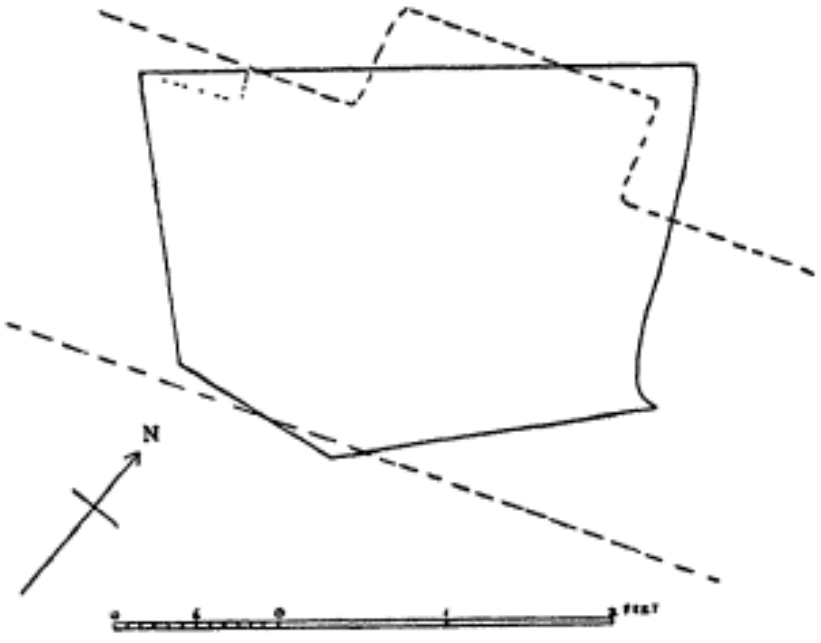

Figure 9.22: *Plan of the chamber at Coille Grulla (SH15), Inverness-shire (Scott, W. 1929: Fig 1)*

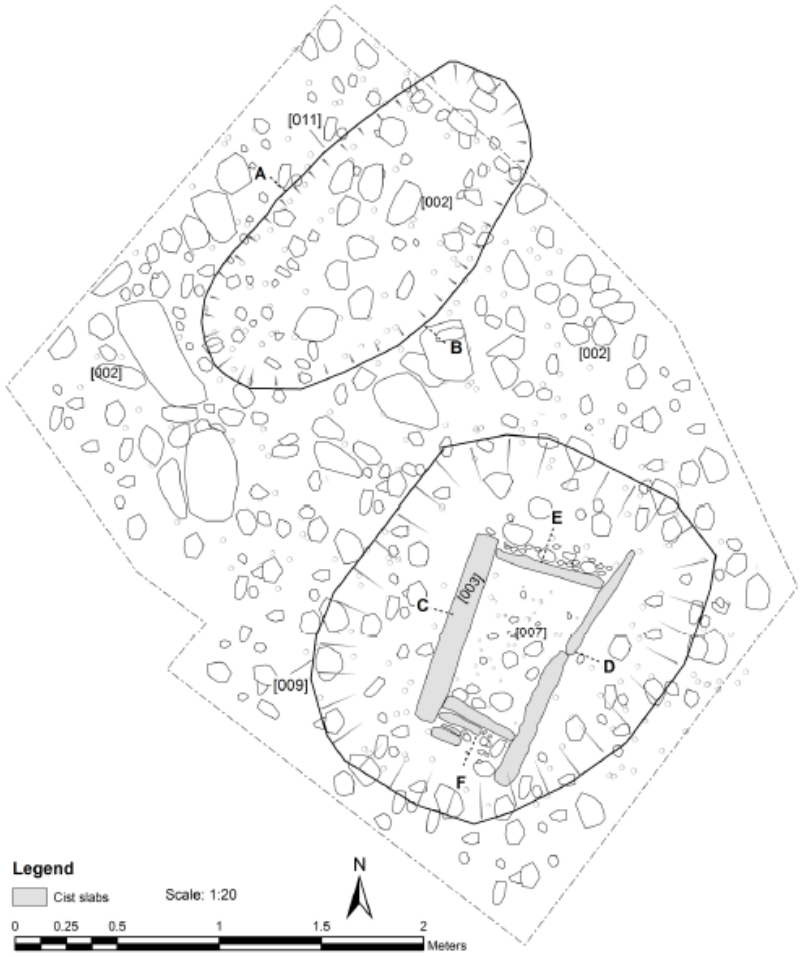

Figure 9.23: *Plan of cists at Drumnadrochit (SH22), Inverness-shire (Peteranna 2015: Figure 4)*

a cist with a stone cairn from the region. Similar D-shape cairns are known from other Scottish sites including Inverlael, Ross & Cromarty (Cree 1914) and Drannadow, Dumfries & Galloway (Edwards 1923), but do not form a cohesive monument type (*cf.* Close-Brooks 1995: 267). One unusual type of cist was noted at Coille Grulla (SH15), comprising a large polygonal chamber (Scott, W. 1929) (Fig. 9.22). Originally interpreted as a chambered cairn, the monument could instead be a large communal cist, akin to those from Orkney and Shetland.

Alongside cists two examples of flat graves were recorded, including the recently discovered burial at Drumnadrochit (SH22). A second cist, aligned NNE-SSW, containing the remains of an adult or adolescent was recorded nearby (Peteranna 2015: 9) (Fig. 9.23). No further artefactual remains were noted. The pit contained no remains, but analysis is ongoing (M. Peteranna pers. comm.). Remains were similarly absent from the second pit burial at

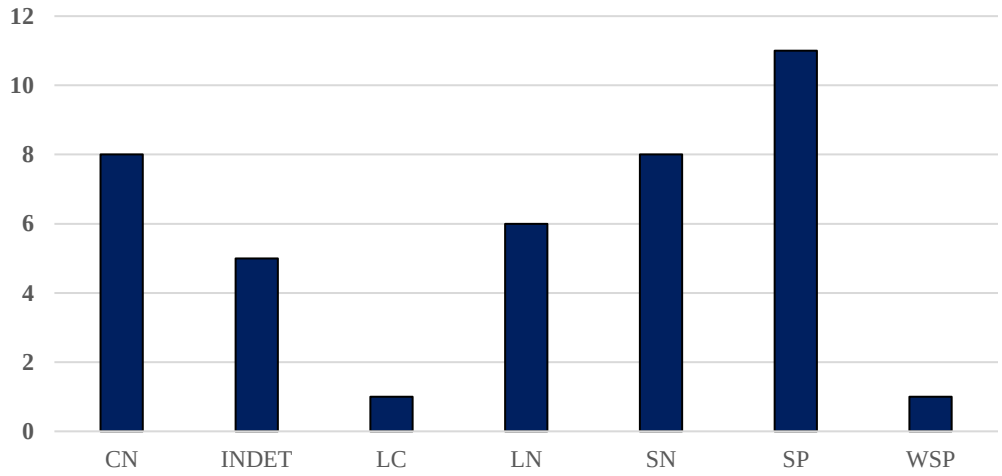

Figure 9.24: *Principal Beaker forms recorded from funerary contexts in the South Highlands*

Key: ***CN.*** *Cupped-necked,* ***INDET.*** *Indeterminate,* ***LC.*** *Low-carinated,* ***LN.*** *Long-necked,* ***SN.*** *Short-necked,* ***SP.*** *S-profile,* ***WSP.*** *Weak s-profile*

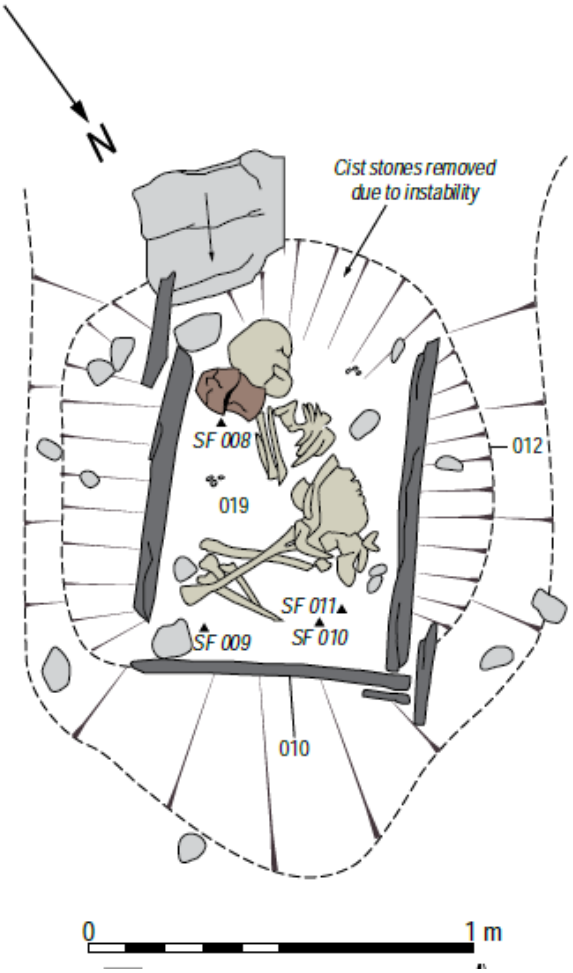

Figure 9.25: *Burial at West Torbreck (SH53), Inverness-shire (Kilpatrick 2014a: Figure 6)*

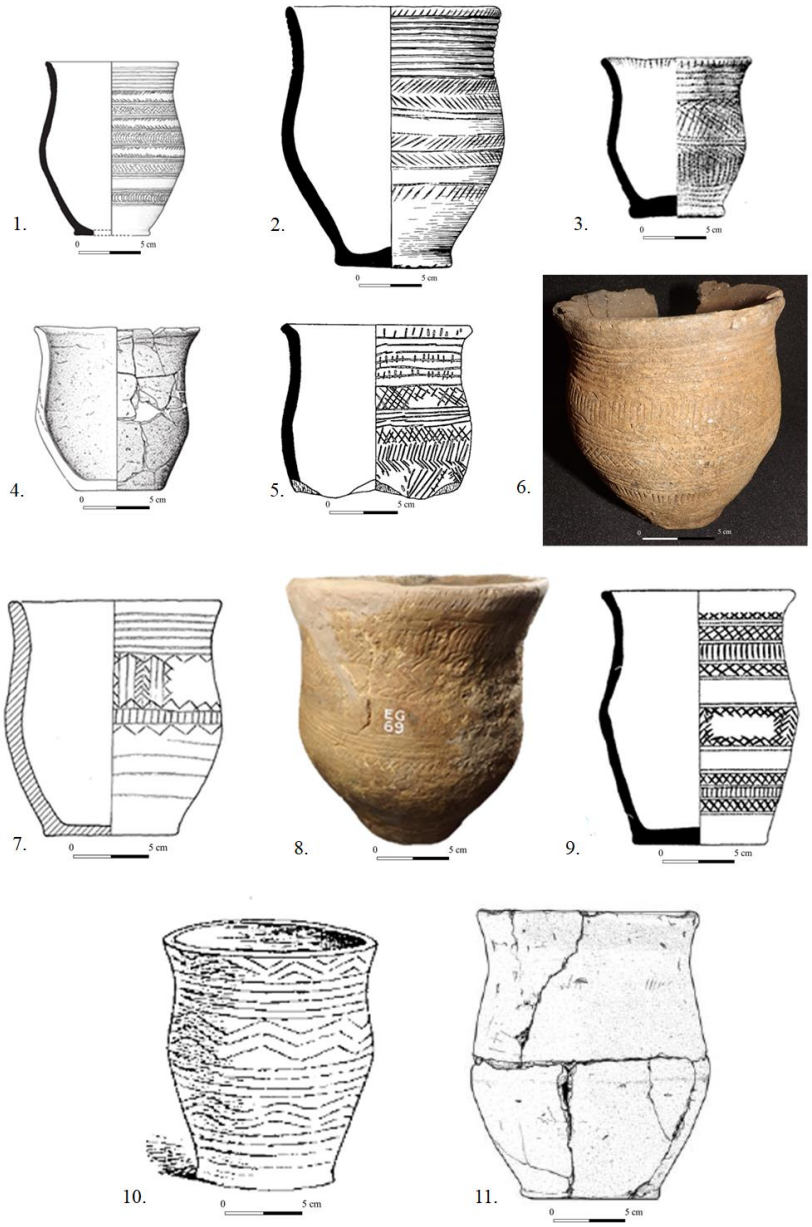

Figure 9.26: *S-profile Beakers from funerary contexts in the South Highlands*

Key: ***1.*** *Holm Mains Farm Cist 1 (SH31), Inverness-shire (Headland Archaeology Ltd. 2007),* ***2.*** *Mains of Balnagowan (SH38), Inverness-shire (Shepherd, I. et al.1985),* ***3.*** *Corran Ferry (SH16), Inverness-shire , (Ritchie, J.N.G. 1973: Fig 6),* ***4.*** *Beechwood Park (SH8), Inverness-shire (Suddaby & Sheirdan 2006: Illus 5)* ***5.*** *EG99 Cawdor Estates (SH13), Nairn (Walker & Henshall 1968: Fig 1),* ***6.*** *Fodderty Farm (SH28), Ross & Cromarty (Author,© N.M.S),* ***7.*** *Bruachaig (SH10), Ross & Cromarty (Henshall & Longworth 1968: Fig 4),* ***8.*** *Findon Mains (SH27), Ross & Cromarty (Author © N.M.S)* ***9.*** *Blackstand (SH9), Ross & Cromarty (Clarke, D.L. 1970)* ***10.*** *Glebe, Edderton (SH30), Ross & Cromarty (Joass 1870: Fig 2),* ***11.*** *West Torbreck (SH53), Inverness-shire (Kilpatrick 2014a: Figure 7)*

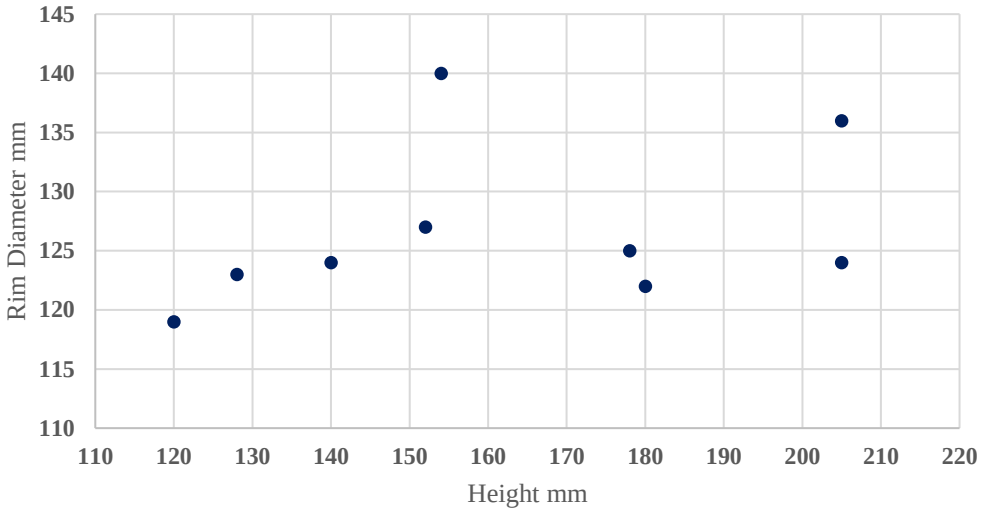

Figure 9.27: *Height and rim diameters of s-profile Beakers from funerary contexts in the South Highlands*

Beechwood Park (SH8), which produced a single s-profile Beaker and a plano-convex knife (Suddaby & Sheridan 2006).

Morphology & Associations

Indeterminate Beakers

Alongside whole vessels in three cases indeterminate fragments of Beakers were recorded. These include sherds from a rounded vase with a long neck from one of the cists at Auchindown (SH5) (MacAndrew 1885; Bain 1893: 12) and a single sherd from the southwest corner of Cist 2 at Holm Mains Farm (SH31). This sherd was found in association with probable female inhumation (Sheridan 2007b: 111)[8]. From the recently discovered pit burial at Drumnadrochit (SH22) a Beaker and stone bracer were recovered (Peteranna 2015: 3)[9]. The outer surfaces of the vessel were decorated with impressions possibly from a feather quill arranged into a series of zones, with the central area occupied by a broad lattice pattern with a single horizontal zig zag above (M. Peteranna pers. comm.). The design is comparable to that on the Poolewe (SH43) Beaker (2015: 11). The vessel was placed into the centre of the pit,

[8] *The burial was initially reported as male (Brown 2003: 87) but was described as female in Sheridan's review of Scottish Beaker dates (2007b: 111).*
[9] *Whilst the neighbouring cist contained a crouched inhumation, the pit did not contain any remains (Peteranna 2015:9).*

1.

2.

Figure 9.28: *Weak s-profile Beakers from funerary contexts in the South Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *New Broadford (SH41), Inverness-shire (Birch 2012)* ***2.*** *Dalmore (SH19), Ross & Cromarty (Author © N.M.S)*

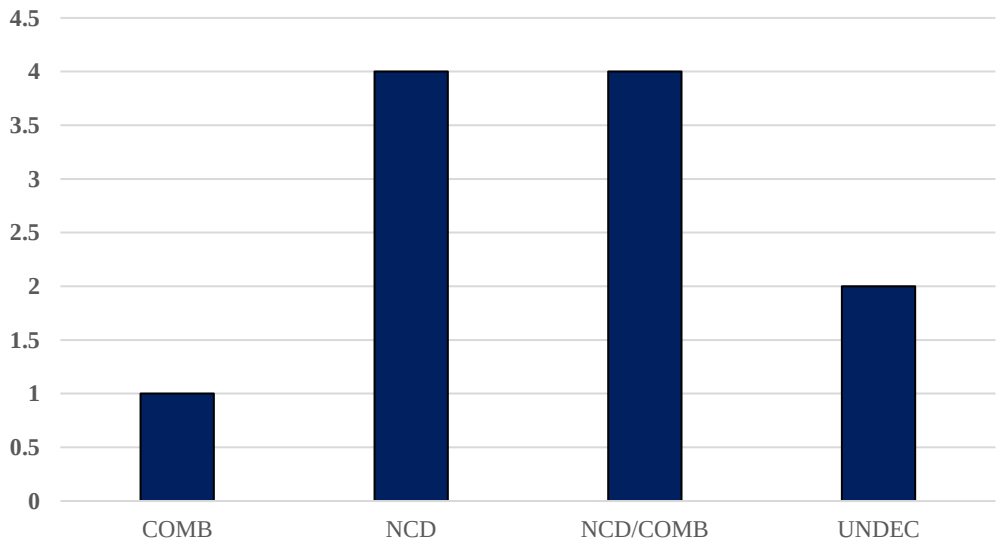

Figure 9.29: *Decorative techniques recorded on s-profile Beakers from funerary contexts in the South Highlands*

Key: ***COMB.*** *Comb impressed,* ***NCD.*** *Incised* ***NCD/COMB.*** *Comb impressed & incised,* ***UNDEC.*** *Undecorated*

Figure 9.30: *Carved stone ball from Bruachaig (SH10), Ross & Cromarty (© Gairloch & District Heritage Society)*

and possibly broken deliberately[10]. Sherds of a probable Beaker were also noted at Dalmore Farm (SH20), but the precise context of these is unclear (Wood 2011; Ballin Smith pers. comm.). The sherd is decorated with a series of incised slashes (Ballin Smith pers. comm.). Other pottery from the site include middle-late Neolithic Impressed Wares alongside sherds from a Cordoned Urn (*ibid.*) (Fig. 9.55). At Kinbeachie Farm (SH36) several fragments of a cord decorated Beaker were recovered. The sherds appear to stem from a disturbed burial (Wordsworth 1997).

S-Profile

S-profile Beakers, accounted for 33% of the total ENV (Fig. 9.24). In total 13 s-profile Beakers (including 2 weak s-profile Beakers) vessels were recorded, distributed mainly across Ross and Cromarty and Inverness. In three cases s-profile Beakers were recorded with male burials. Bodies did not appear to follow any alignment, but information was only available in three cases. The West Torbreck (SH53) Beaker, associated with the single mid-adult female burial aligned north/ south, was placed in front of the skull (Kilpatrick 2014b: 7) (Fig. 9.25). Given the limited size of the dataset it was not possible to closely associate differences in morphology

[10] *At the time of writing post-excavation analysis was ongoing, and thus the information presented here is tentative, deriving principally from the available data-structure report and information provided by M. Peteranna.*

to age or sex. Vessels ranged from squat to tall elongate types (Fig. 9.26). Heights ranged from 120-205mm, with 38% clustering between 140-154mm (Fig. 9.27). Rims overall were simple, predominantly rounded or pointed.

Among the s-profile Beakers the nature and position of the belly can vary. The Beechwood Park (SH8) Beaker is carinated resulting from the lower half of the pot being pinched up with coils added (Suddaby & Sheridan 2006: 81) (Fig. 9.26.4). The Fodderty Farm (SH28) vessel sported a high belly above the mid-point, with an internally bevelled rim (Fig. 9.26.6). The

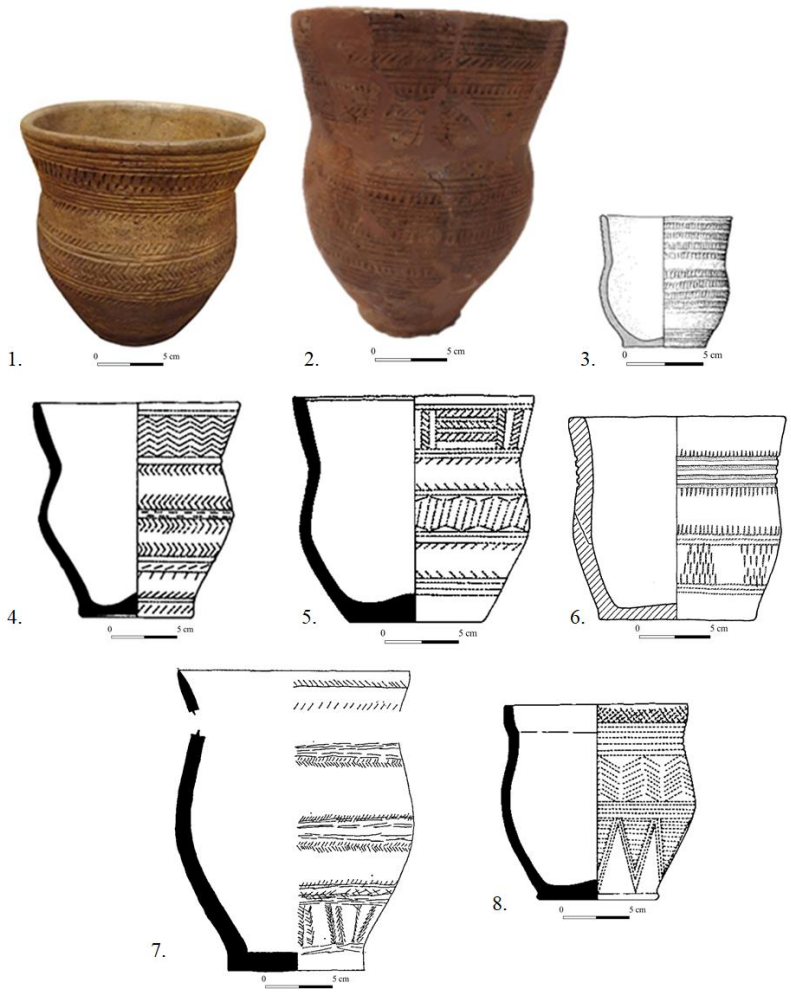

Figure 9.31: *Short-necked Beakers recorded from funerary contexts in the South Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *South Clunes (SH48), Inverness-shire (Author © Marischal Museum)* ***2.*** *Culduthel Mains (SH18), Inverness-shire (Author © N.M.S),* ***3.*** *Balblair (SH6), Inverness-shire (Hanley & Sheridan 1994: Illus 5),* ***4.*** *Inchnacaorach (SH320), Nairn (Clarke, D.L. 1970: no. 1730)* ***5.*** *Fyrish (SH29), Ross & Cromarty (Clarke, D.L. 1970: no. 1749,)* ***6.*** *Achnasheen (SH1), Ross & Cromarty (Walker & Henshall 1968: Fig 4),* ***7.*** *Auchindown Cist 4 (SH5), Nairn (Walker 1967: fig 1),* ***8.*** *Dalmore (SH19) (Clarke, D.L. 1970: no 1746)*

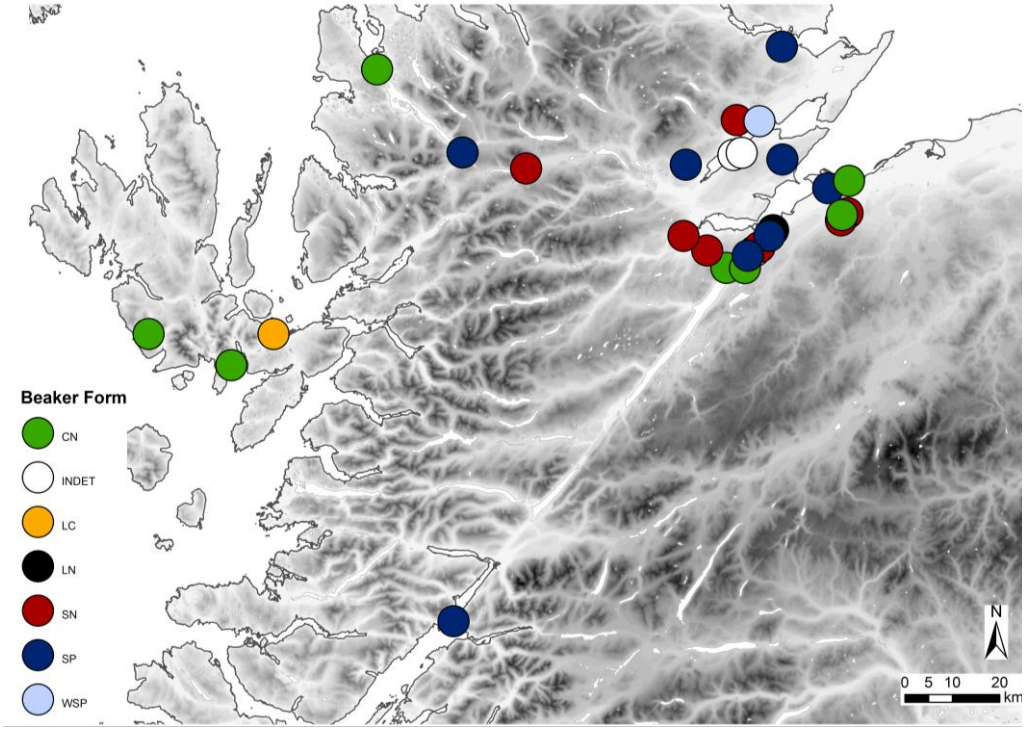

Figure 9.32: *Distribution of Beakers by form in the South Highlands:*

Key: ***CN.*** *Cupped-necked,* ***INDET.*** *Indeterminate,* ***LC.*** *Low-carinated,* ***LN.*** *Long-necked,* ***SN.*** *Short-necked,* ***SP.*** *S-profile,* ***WSP.*** *Weak s-profile*

Figure 9.33: *Beaker and associated artefacts from Culduthel Mains Cist 2 (SH18), Inverness-shire (© N.M.S) (not to scale)*

vessel from Glebe (SH30) could be of a similar form, but the extant illustration is unclear (Fig. 9.26.10). A single weak s-profile Beaker was recorded from New Broadford (SH41) decorated with all-over twisted cord decoration (Fig. 9.28.1). Whilst the form is suggestive of low-carinated Beakers, the presence of the raised cordon is reminiscent of those on the Loch More (NH23) vessel. As at Loch More (NH23) the cordon is undecorated dividing the vessel into two roughly equal sections. The weak s-profile Beaker from Dalmore, Alness (SH19) has a flattened s-profile and everted rim (Fig. 9.28.2). The belly is defined by a broad undecorated zone.

72% of the s-profile Beakers are decorated by incision and incision combined with comb (Fig. 9.29). Vessels are commonly decorated in two or three zones, the Beaker from Holm Mains Farm Cist 1 (SH31) was decorated in five zones. 60% of the s-profile Beakers (excluding weak s-profile Beakers) were decorated with multiple lines of horizontal incision/ grooves, or comb around the neck, with 57% of these occurring within Inverness and Nairn, the remainder from Ross and Cromarty. This mode of decoration is found among s-profile Beakers vessels from Aberdeenshire, including Ruthven, Lesmurdie and Incsh (Shepherd, I. 1986). Whilst the decoration of the neck provides one point of similarity, the decorative schemes below the neck are varied. The Beaker from Bruachaig (SH10) is, below the grooves, decorated with a set of metope panels (Fig. 9.26.7) (Henshall & Longworth 1966: 248). Metope panels also occur on the Beaker from Blackstand (SH9), whilst infilled hexagons were recorded at Fodderty Farm (SH28). The Beakers from Beechwood Park (SH8) and West Torbreck (SH53) are undecorated. These are the only examples of undecorated Beakers from the region (Fig. 9.26. 4, 11). Bases of s-profile and weak s-profile Beakers overall were simple or slightly pedestalled.

61% of the s-profile Beakers were associated with other artefacts. Only in one case was more than one additional artefact recovered in association. At Holm Mains Farm Cist 1 (SH31) the finds included a single sheep or goat bone, barbed and tanged arrowheads and ten further worked flints (H.A.: 2007: 4). Flint was the most common category of find found in association. Flint artefacts included flint strike a light from Corran Ferry (SH16) (Low 1944: 436). This is one of several ‘fire starter’ kits from the region, including the previously discussed example from Dornoch Nursery (NH15) (*cf.* Teather & Chamberlain 2015). A further strike a light was recovered from a cist excavated at Flowerburn in 1883 (MacKenzie, C. 1885). The nature of the associated ceramic is unclear in the excavation report (*cf.* **App. E3**). Strike-a-lights are principally recorded from male burials (Teather & Chamberlain 2015: 189), suggesting that the Corran Ferry (SH16) burial was male. This would further reinforce

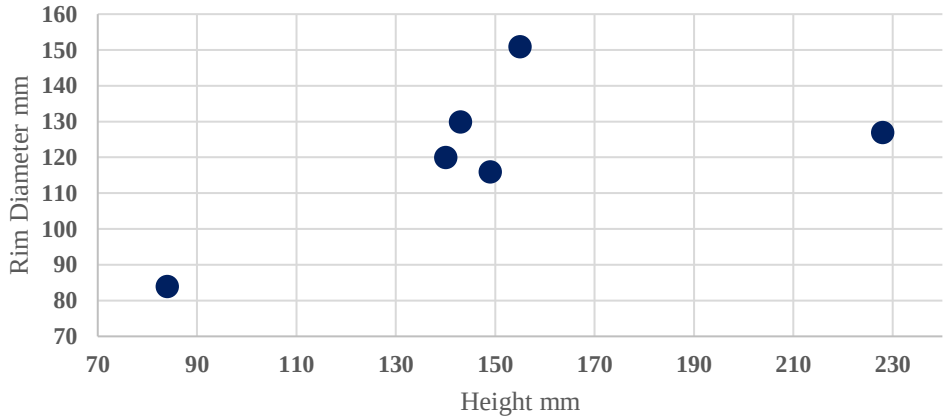

Figure 9.34: *Rim diameters and height of short-necked Beakers from funerary contexts in the South Highlands*

the correlation between s-profile Beakers and male burials (Wilkin & Curtis 2016: 39). One unusual find was that of a stone ball from Gairloch reputedly in association with the burial at Bruachaig (SH10) dug in 1898 (Forrest 2007: 5) (Fig. 9.30). If the association is correct this would be the only example of a Beaker vessel associated with a carved stone ball. The current dating of balls (*cf.* Edmonds 1992: 181-2) would suggest it had been curated before deposition. The ball itself is carved from material not indigenous to the region and was likely brought in from elsewhere (Forrest 2007: 14).

Short-necked

Short-necked Beakers formed 20% of the group (*n.* 8), recorded from Inverness and Nairn, with a further cluster in Ross and Cromarty (Fig. 9.32). 62% of the vessels had sex and age information, with a bias towards adult males. There was no clear preference for the placement of the vessel, with the Beaker from Inchnacaorach (SH32) placed behind the head, whilst the vessel from South Clunes (SH49) was placed behind the pelvis. Short-necked Beakers ranged from 140-155mm tall, with squat proportions, but two tall examples from Culduthel Mains (SH18) (226mm) and Auchindown Cist 4 (SH5) (228mm) were recorded (Fig. 9.34). Vessels ranged from rounded to angular profiles with the carination typically around the midpoint of the vessel (Fig. 9.31). Whilst there are, as with s-profile Beakers, subtle differences in form, there is insufficient contextual information to support further subdivision. The angled necks provide a focal point for decoration, the Fyrish (SH29), Balblair (SH6) and Inchnacaorach (SH32) Beakers sport a single broad band of decoration across the neck (Fig. 9.31). In the case

of the Fyrish (SH29) Beaker this comprised a set of metope panels, with a band of infilled hexagons across the belly (Fig. 9.31.5). The second Beaker attributed to Dalmore (NH19) sports a series of broad geometric patterns, the tall triangles on the bottom zone recalling those found on Irish lunulae (Fig. 9.31.8) (for an overview of lunulae motifs see Taylor, J. 1970). The grooving noted on the necks of s-profile Beakers was absent, except for the Achnasheen (SH1) Beaker which sports a narrow band of grooves (Fig. 9.31.6). Bases as in s-profile Beakers were either simple or slightly pedestalled. In four cases vessels were associated with additional grave goods. At Fyrish (SH29) a stone bracer was recorded and is one of seven found within the South Highlands. The bracer is made from rocks sourced from the Langdale area in the Lake District (Ixer *et al.* 2011: 40). The bracer from Culduthel Mains (SH18) was likely sourced from the Langdale area as well (*ibid.*). Unlike the Fyrish (SH29) bracer the four

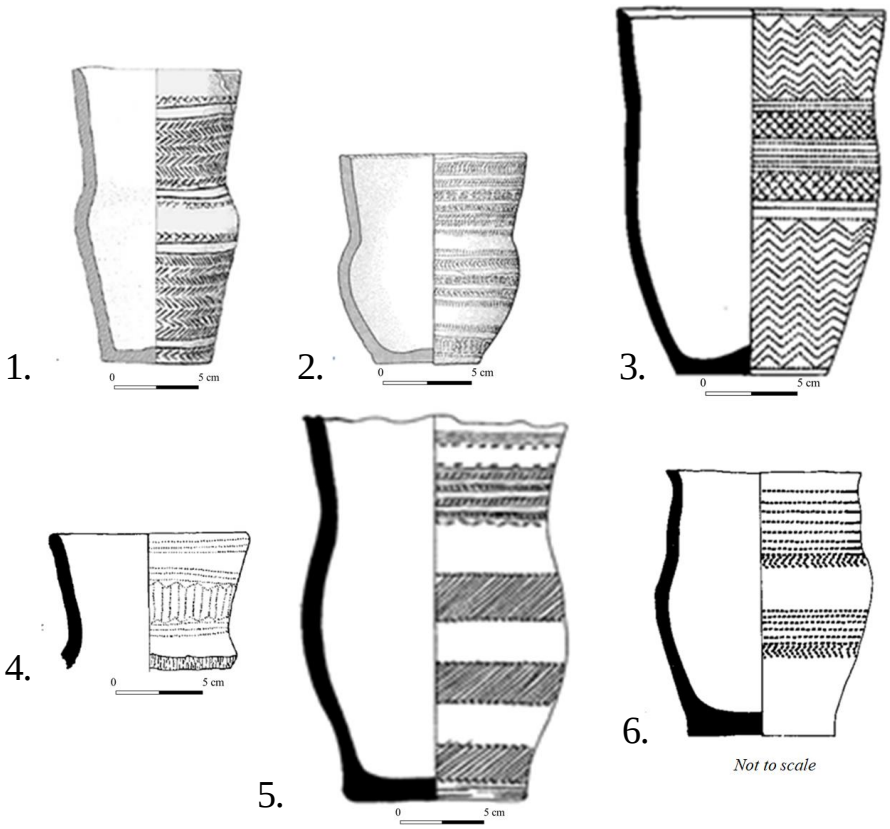

Figure 9.35: *Long-necked Beakers found in funerary contexts in the South Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *Seafield West (SH47), Inverness-shire (Cressey & Sheridan 2003: Illus 10)* ***2.*** *Balblair (SH6), Inverness-shire (Hanley & Sheridan 1994: Illus 6),* ***3.*** *Coille Grulla A (SH15), Inverness-shire (Clarke, D.L. 1970: 1674),* ***4.*** *EG100 Cawdor (SH13), Nairn (Walker & Henshall 1968: Fig 1),* ***5.*** *EG101 Cawdor (SH13), Nairn (ibid.),* ***6.*** *Cawdor (SH13), Nairn (Clarke, D.L. 1970: no. 1732)*

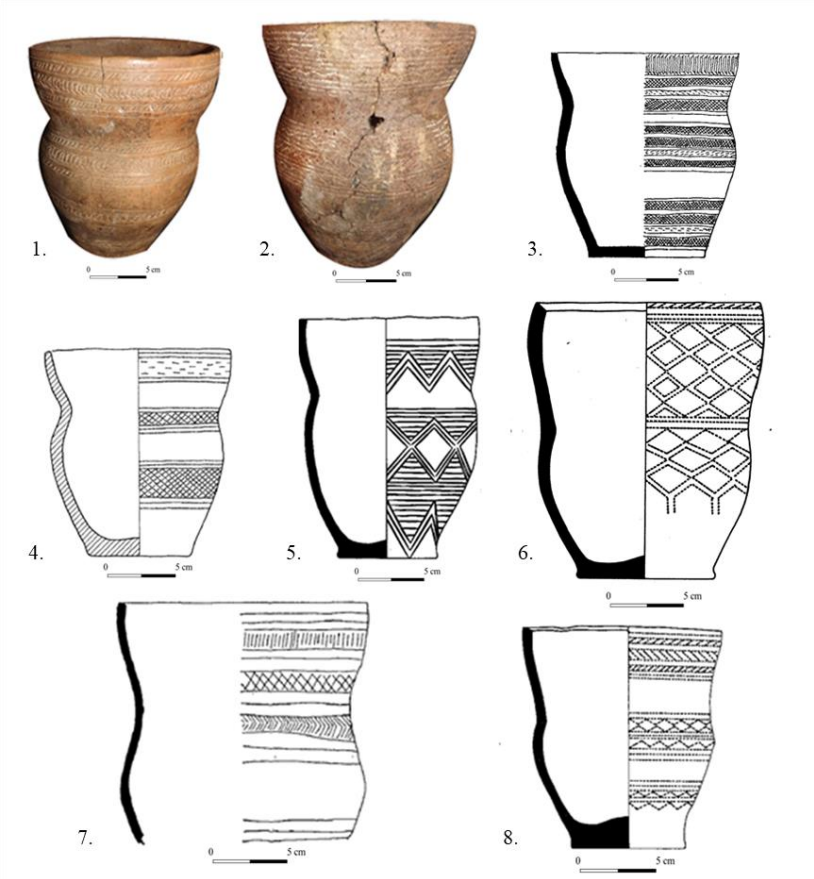

Figure 9.36: *Cupped-necked vessels from funerary contexts in the South Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *Lochend (SH37), Inverness-shire,* ***2.*** *Drumashie (SH21), Inverness-shire,* ***3.*** *Easter Delnies (SH23), Nairn (Walker 1964: Fig 1),* ***4.*** *Poolewe (SH43), Ross & Cromarty (Henshall & Longworth 1966: Fig 3)* ***5.*** *Cnocan Na Gobhar Kilmarie (SH14), Inverness-shire (Clarke, D.L. 1970: no.1672) 6) Coille Grulla (SH15) (Clarke, D.L. 1970: no. 1764)* ***7.*** *Auchindown (SH5), Nairn (Walker 1967: Fig 2),* ***8.*** *Cawdor (SH13), Nairn (Clarke, D.L. 1970: no. 1722)*

rivets were capped with gold, this was the only association between Beakers and metal artefacts from the study area (see **Section 11.34**) The remaining artefacts from Culduthel Mains (SH18) included a bone belt ring, barbed and tanged arrowheads, an amber bead and a strike-a-light (Fig. 9.33). At Inchnacaorach (SH32) a set of bone tools were recovered (Love & McMullen 1994: 25), comprising a bone chisel and two awls. The inclusion of these tools could indicate a craft role such as leather or flint working (**Section 3.3.1**). At Auchindown Cist 4 (SH5) a white pebble is reputed to have been found in the grave (Walker 1964: 101).

Long-necked

Six examples of long-necked Beakers were recorded, primarily from the Cawdor region (SH13), with two examples from Inverness and a single vessel from Skye. Unlike the preceding s-profile and short-necked Beakers long-necked vessels demonstrated a high degree of diversity, ranging from narrow to bulbous profiles (Fig. 9.32). Sinuous long-neck forms were common, including the two examples from Cawdor Estates (SH13) (Fig. 9.32.5, 6). Other long-necked forms differ in having narrow, carinated bodies, with angled long necks (Fig. 9.32.1, 4). Heights ranged from 140 to 203mm and rim diameters of 102-140mm. The inclusion of the larger of the two Beakers from Balblair (SH6) based on its RDN of 0.46 suggests that the distinction between long and short-necked in certain cases is minor. Importantly such categories are not empirical but stem from choices made during construction (**Section 3.4.2**). In the remaining cases it was not possible to obtain RDN measurements, but the extension of the neck in these cases is more pronounced. Vessels were typically decorated with comb impressions, with a preference for simple designs, including herringbone and multiple zig-zags. No additional artefacts were recorded in association with long-necked Beakers. Sex and age information was unavailable, hampering further examination of the significance of differences across forms.

Cupped-necked

The final category of Beakers were vessels with marked cup like mouths (Fig. 9.33). Eight examples were recorded, concentrated in the Nairn region, deriving from the cemetery at Auchindown (SH5), Easter Delnies (SH23) and Cawdor (SH13). Cupped-necked vessels range from 160-209mm tall with rim diameters of 134-158mm. Rims are simple with internal bevels or rounded without internal bevels. As with long-necked Beakers there is a degree of variation in the neck and mouth. Mouths ranged from shallow to deeper examples at Coille Grulla B (SH15) and Auchindown (SH5) creating a figure of 8 shape. In some cases, as at Cawdor (SH13),[11] the curvature of the mouth is subtle, overlapping in part with long-necked forms. While vessels are typically decorated with 3 to 4 narrow zones the Beakers from Cnocan Na Gobhar (SH14) and Coille Grulla B (SH15) displayed more complex geometric designs (Fig. 9.33.5,6).

[11] *This vessel is reputed to have been found with a further vessel (Clarke, D.L. 1970 no. 1722/ 321, 1723/ 311, Crichton-Mitchell 1934: 243, 244)*

As with long-necked Beakers age and sex information was limited with only two male burials at Lochend (SH37) and Drumashie (SH21). At Drumashie (SH21) the Beaker was set in a small pit just below the chin (Small unpub.). In only two cases were the vessels associated with additional artefacts, in both cases these comprised flint objects. At Drumashie (SH21) two worked flints were recovered (Small unpub.), whilst at Lochend (SH37) a flint nodule was found in the north-east corner of the cist (Childe *et al.* 1944: 106). The vessel from Cawdor

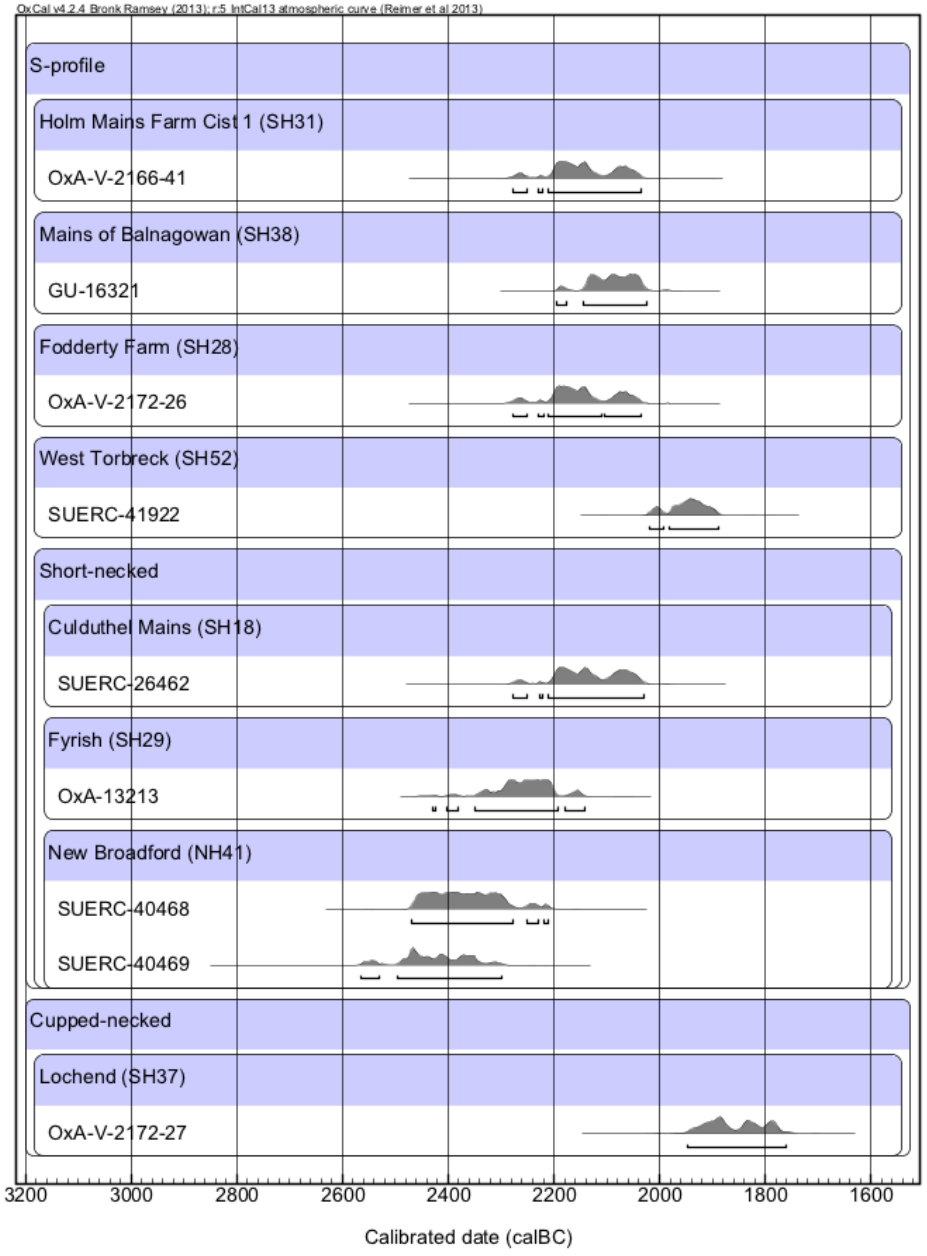

Figure 9.37: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for Beakers recovered from funerary contexts in the South Highlands (see **App. F4** for details)*

(SH13) was found alongside a further vessel of possible long-necked form (Table 9.6) (Fig. 9.35. 6).

Chronology

Eight radiocarbon dates were available falling post 2300 cal BC (Fig. 9.37). The Beaker from Fyrish (SH29) dates to *c.* 2430-2140 cal BC (OxA-13213) (**App. F4**). Based on similarities with the associated bracer from Culduthel Mains (SH18), the actual date could fall post 2200 cal BC. S-profile Beakers are better dated, forming a relatively cohesive group dating to between 2200-2000 cal BC (Fig. 9.37). The West Torbreck (SH53) Beaker falls somewhat later, 2030-1880 cal BC (SUERC-41922) (**App. F4**), suggesting a late phase of s-profile Beaker use, overlapping with the use of cupped-necked, and probably long-necked vessels. Cupped-necked vessels could, as indicated by the date from Lochend (SH37), extend to *c.*1800 cal BC. The Beechwood Park (SH8) burial based on its associations, including placement in a pit, has been suggested to lie early in the sequence (Suddaby & Sheridan 206:85), possibly overlapping with the early vessel from New Broadford (SH41) dated to the early 24th century (Fig. 9.37).

Summary

Several Beaker forms are represented with a preference for s-profile vessels. The limited sample of dated examples suggest most of these date post 2200 cal BC (Fig. 9.37). S-profile vessels showed a preference for bellies roughly at the mid-point, falling broadly into two groups, the first with squatter/ rounded proportions and a second with narrower elongate

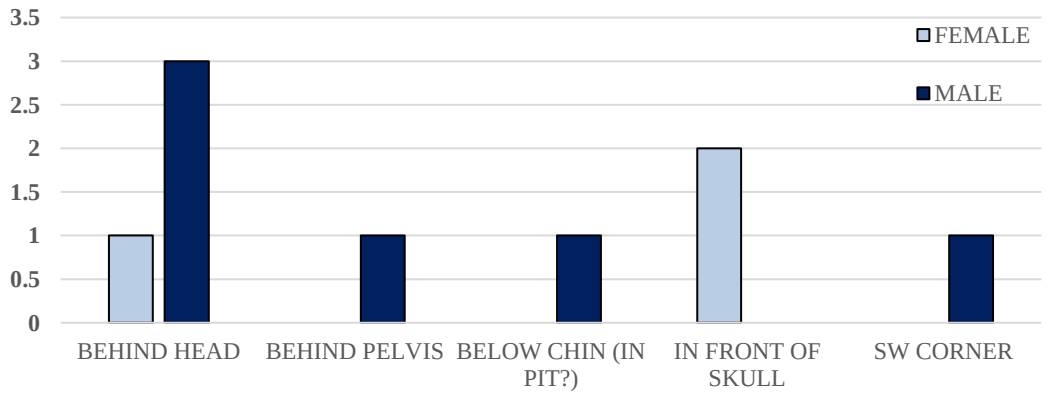

Figure 9.38: *Position of Beakers within funerary contexts in the South Highlands*

profiles (Fig. 9.26 & 9.27). Whilst decoration is frequently arranged in narrow bands two vessels with metope panels were recorded. Metope panels were recorded on short-necked Beakers, including at Fyrish (SH29). Short necked as with s-profile Beakers varied between tall elongate and squatter versions (Fig. 9.34). There is a high degree of variation among cupped-necked and long-necked Beakers. In the case of cupped-necked Beakers the cup like mouth formed the primary area of variation, ranging from shallow as at Drumashie (SH21) and Poolewe (SH43), to deep long necked variants at Coille Grulla (SH15) and Cnocan Na Gobhar (SH14). In several cases the distinction between these and s-profile Beakers was slight, creating a degree of ambiguity in the classification. As highlighted in previous chapters a fluid continuum of Beaker forms can be envisaged with grey areas between each (see **Section 4.3.2**). As will be further discussed in **Chapter 10**, long-necked forms can be viewed as closely related to tall short-necked vessels, with increased emphasis placed on the neck.

Beakers were predominantly deposited as single vessels, recovered in a whole or fragmentary state. Four cists had pairs of Beakers, including the large and small vessel from Balblair (SH6) and the two vessels from the recently excavated site at New Broadford (SH41). The inclusion of a pair of vessels in early Beaker burials is not unusual, the burial of the Amesbury Archer included five Beakers (Cleal 2011: 141), and at Upper Largie three Beakers were included (Cook *et al.* 2010: 175). At Findon Mains (SH27) the base of a further vessel was recovered, but no human remains were recorded from the site (Galbraith 1937: 248). From the cist at Balblair (SH6) two Beakers were also recorded (Hanley & Sheridan 1994). At Coille Grulla (SH15) two vessels were recovered from the 'chamber', the first pot was fragmentary, while the other "*tightly wedged in with water worn pebbles around and below it*" was more complete

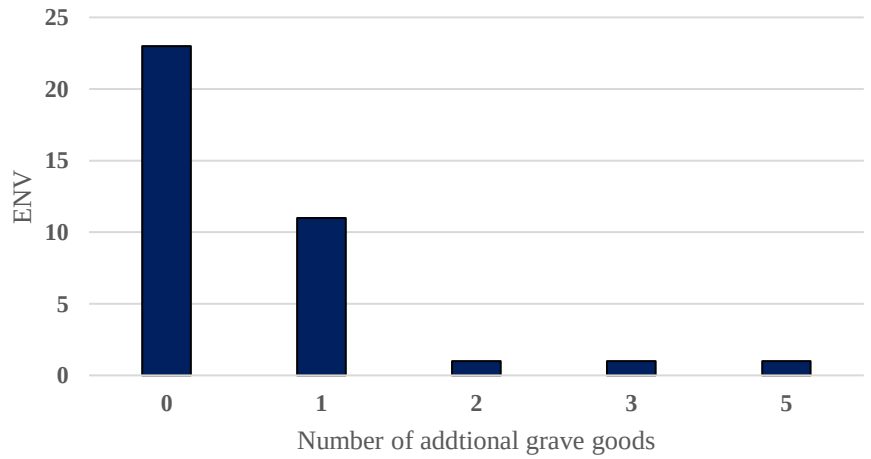

Figure 9.39: *Count of Beakers with additional grave goods in the South Highlands*

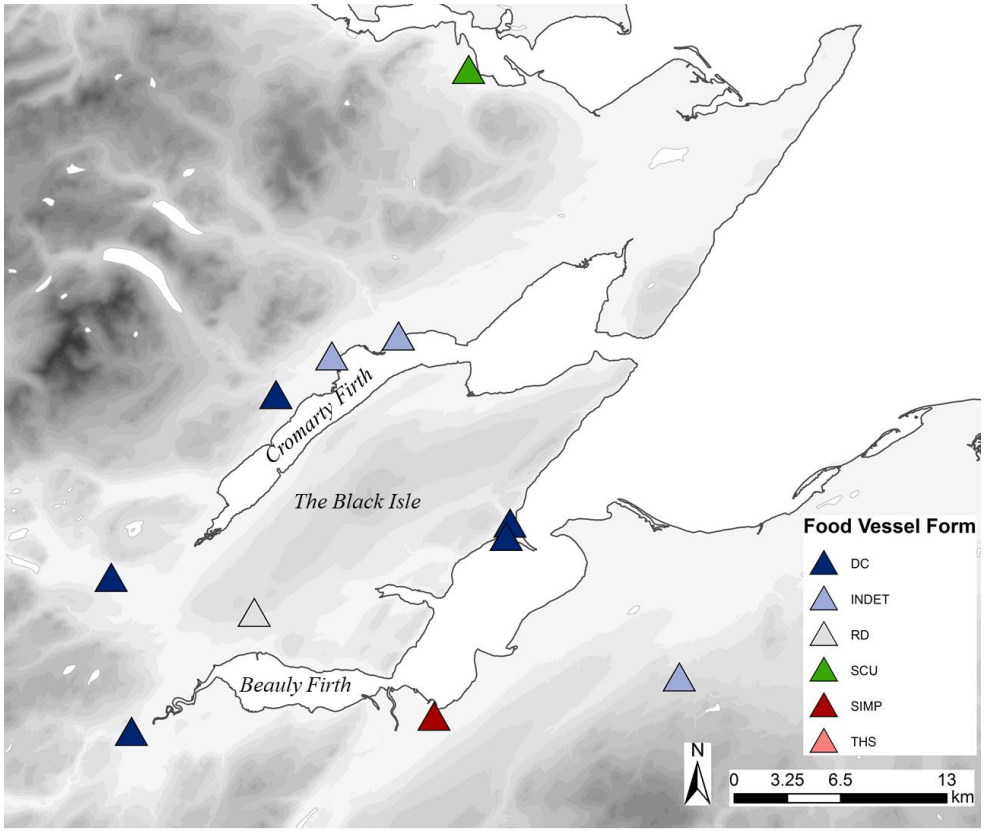

Figure 9.40: *Distribution of Food Vessel vases from funerary contexts in the south-eastern Highlands:*

Key: ***DC.*** *Double cavetto,* ***INDET.*** *Indeterminate,* ***RD.*** *Ridged,* ***SCU.*** *Single upper-cavetto,* ***SIMP.*** *Simple,* ***THS.*** *Tall high-shouldered*

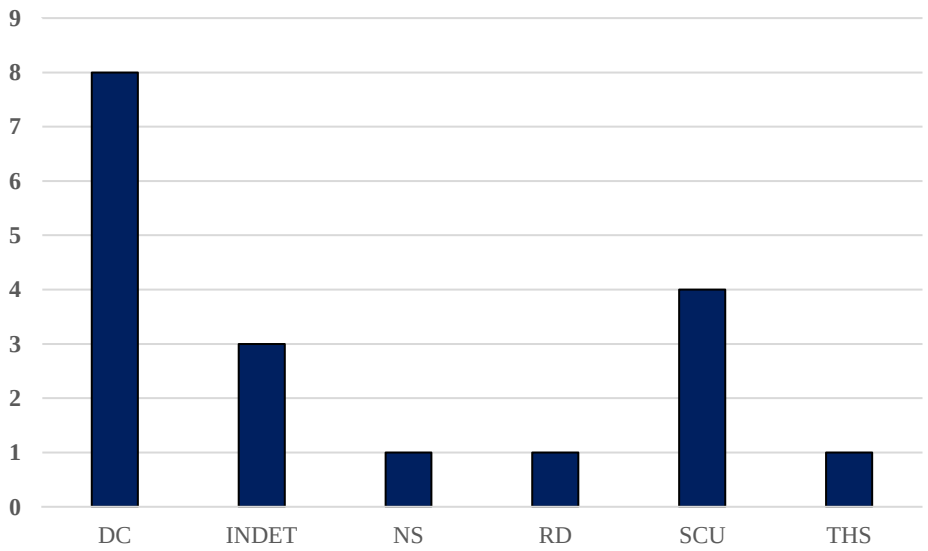

Figure 9.41: *Principal Food Vessel forms recorded from funerary contexts in the South Highlands:*

Key: ***DC.*** *Double cavetto,* ***INDET.*** *Indeterminate,* ***RD.*** *Ridged,* ***SCU.*** *Single upper-cavetto,* ***SIMP.*** *Simple,* ***THS.*** *Tall high-shouldered*

(Scott, W. 1929: 165). Two vessels were found in a cist in Cawdor with an inhumation, but further details are lacking (PSAS LXIX: 397).

Beakers were predominantly associated with males, but age and sex information for the region was limited, with only 31% (*n.* 12) of vessels having associated information. Considering this it is not possible to relate differences in form and decoration to sex and age. S-profile vessels did show a general association with young-mid adult males. There was a slight distinction in vessel placement with the two female burials having vessels placed in front of the head, whilst males tended to have vessels placed behind the head (Fig. 9.38). One exception to these trends is the Drumashie (SH21) Beaker which, was placed in front of the head in a small pit (Small unpub.). Children were overall absent, but it has been suggested that the small vessel from Balblair (SH6) could have been produced for a child (Hanley & Sheridan 1994: 138). The size of the cist, at 0.65m long, can be cited as further evidence in favour of this view. Fowler in his study of north-east remains notes that cists *c.* 60 cm long could have been for children (2013a: 147). At Raigmore (SH44) Simpson noted that the small size of several of the cists could have accommodated juveniles (1996: 58). As with females, children may have been treated in different ways to males, employing other non-ceramic grave goods or alternative modes of burial, such as cremation.

Additional grave goods whilst limited, were more common in the west, with pots typically associated with worked or unworked flint (Fig. 9.39). Whether these flints formed part of the preparation of the cists or the actual grave assemblage is unclear. Metal artefacts overall are absent except for the rivets from Culduthel Mains (SH18). Whilst there are subtle differences in Beaker morphology, these do not appear to extend to the way the pot is categorized as part of the wider funerary assemblage. Differences in form and decoration instead appear to reflect regional choices in production. Within the limited dating evidence, it is possible to detect shifts in preferred forms over time, with s-profile vessels continuing to be employed after 2200 cal BC[12], overlapping in part with the emergence of Food Vessels. These likely overlap with the emergence of cupped and long-necked Beakers (Wilkin 2011b: 30).

[12] *Regarding a 'start date' for the use of s-profile vessels this could, based on analogy with the north-east of Scotland, lie around 2300 cal BC (Wilkin 2011b: 27)*

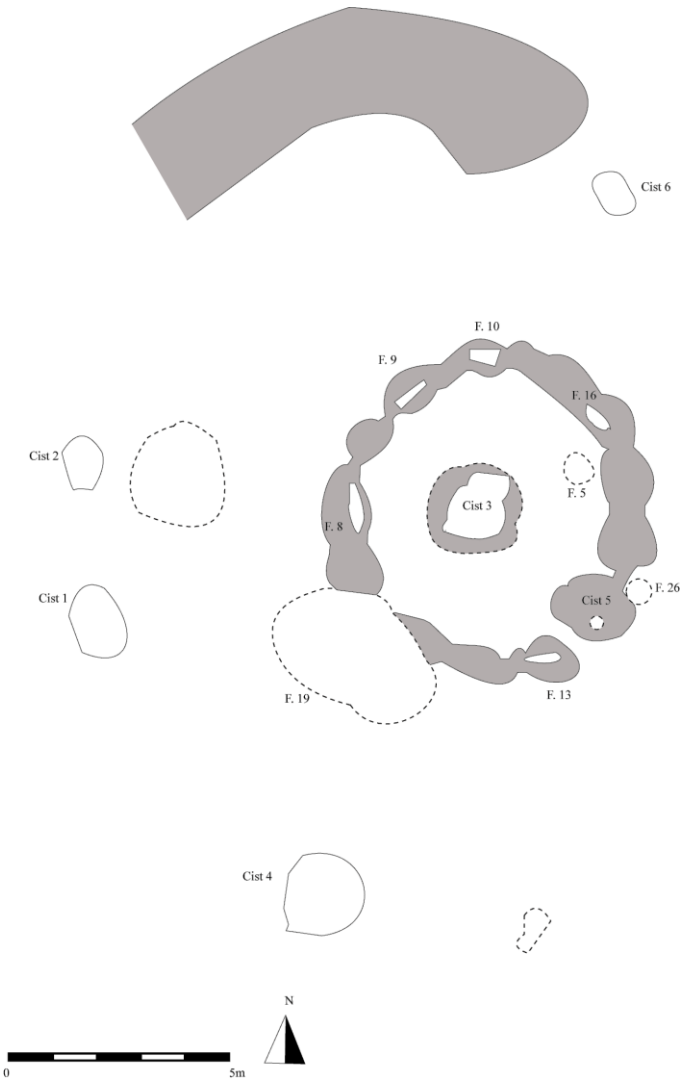

Figure 9.42: *Plan of features at Armadale (SH4), Inverness-shire (after Peteranna 2011b)*

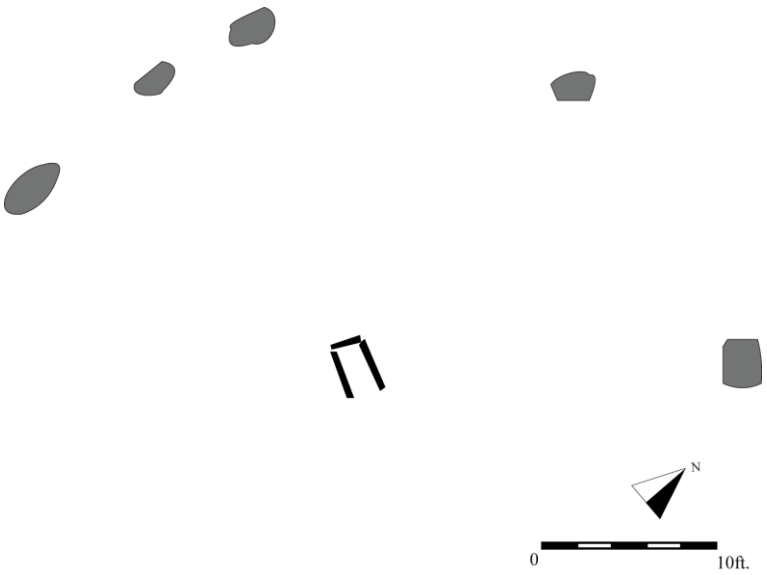

Figure 9.43: *Stones and cist at Carriblair (SH12), Ross & Cromarty*

9.3.3 Food Vessel vases

Seventeen Food Vessel vases were recorded, accounting for 26% of the total funerary finds. These were concentrated in Ross and Cromarty, the bulk deriving from north of the Cromarty Firth where 61% of the vessels were found (Fig. 9.40). These vessels form a roughly north south distribution bordering the distribution of Beakers to the east on the Moray Firth coast (Fig. 9.15). The three recorded examples from Skye derived from the cemetery site at Armadale (SH4) (Fig. 9.42). A further four vessels were identified but could not be ascribed a specific provenance or form. These include the possible Food Vessel from Ardochy (Abercromby 1912: no. 338) and no. 349 in Abercromby's corpus decorated with whipped cord impressions (**App. E3**). 47% of the Food Vessels were of double-cavetto form, with single-cavetto vessels making up a significant percentage of the group (Fig. 9.41). Three vessels could not be assigned a specific form, this includes the rim sherds from Wester Teaninich (SH52) and Auchindown (SH5)[13]. Within these broad form groups, it is possible to make sub-divisions that can tentatively be related to the wider associations of the vessel.

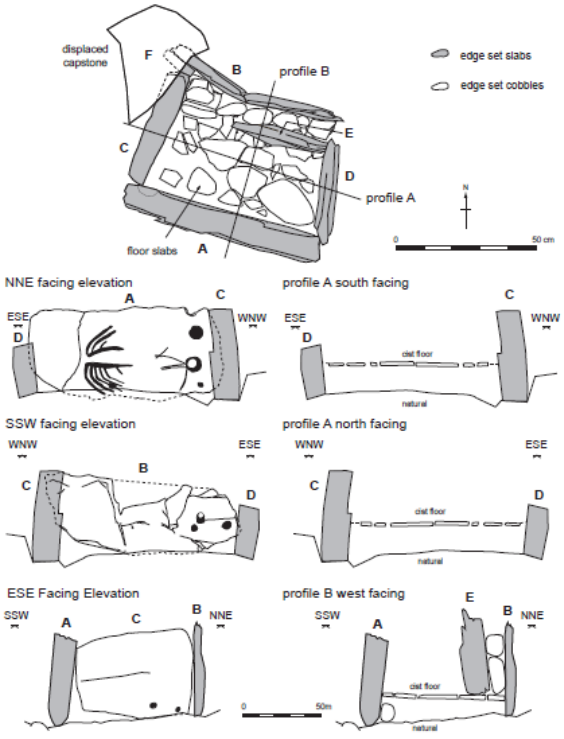

Figure 9.44: *Plan of cist and rock art panels at Balblair Wood (SH7), Inverness-shire (Dutton et al.2007: Illus 4)*

[13] *Finds from Auchindown (SH5) include the previously discussed Beakers, and two further vessels housed in Cambridge Museum 1923.1317 and 1923.1316 (I. Gunn pers comm.)*

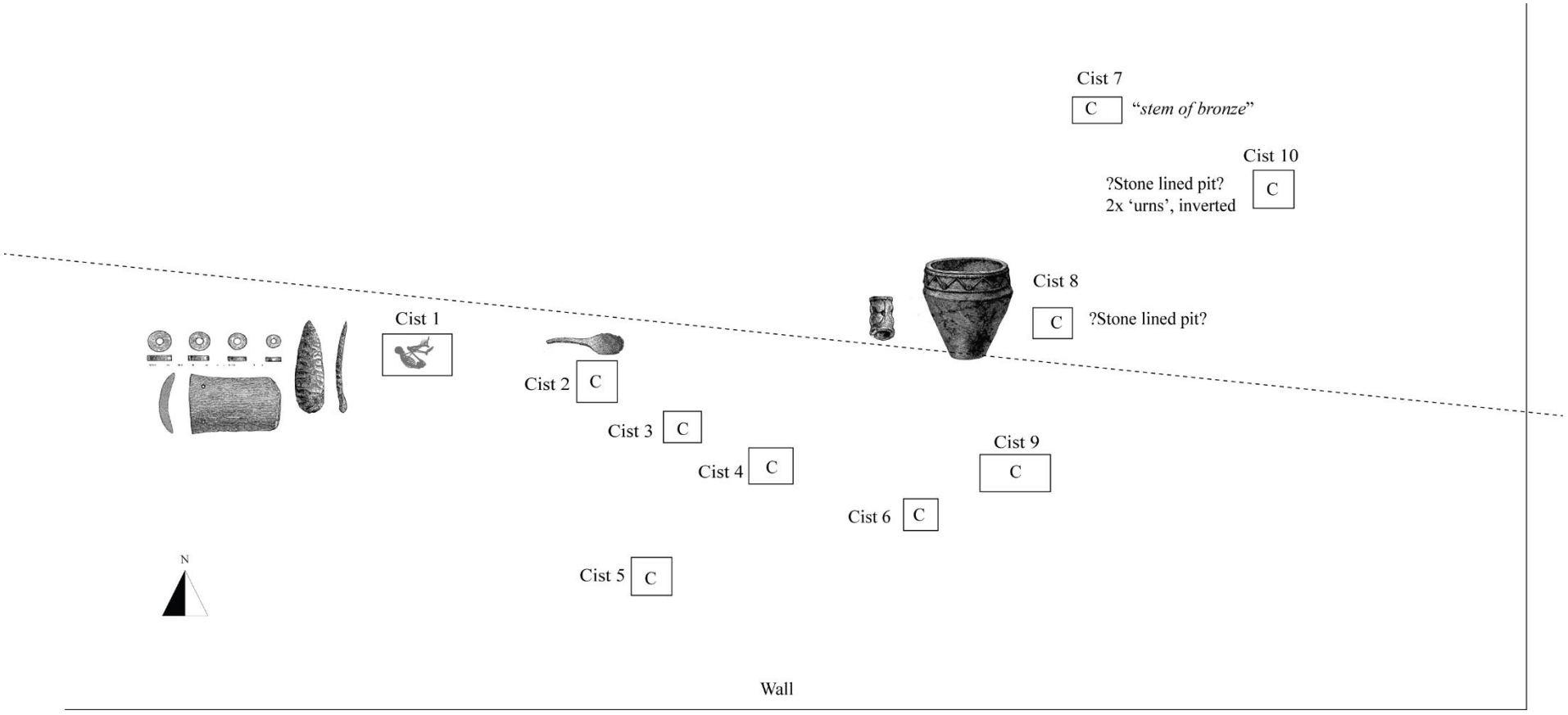

Figure 9.45: *Layout of graves in Group 1 Dalmore (SH19), Ross & Cromarty and associated artefacts: C= Cremation. Dotted line may represent course of railway – but this is not explicitly stated in the report (after Jolly 1879)*

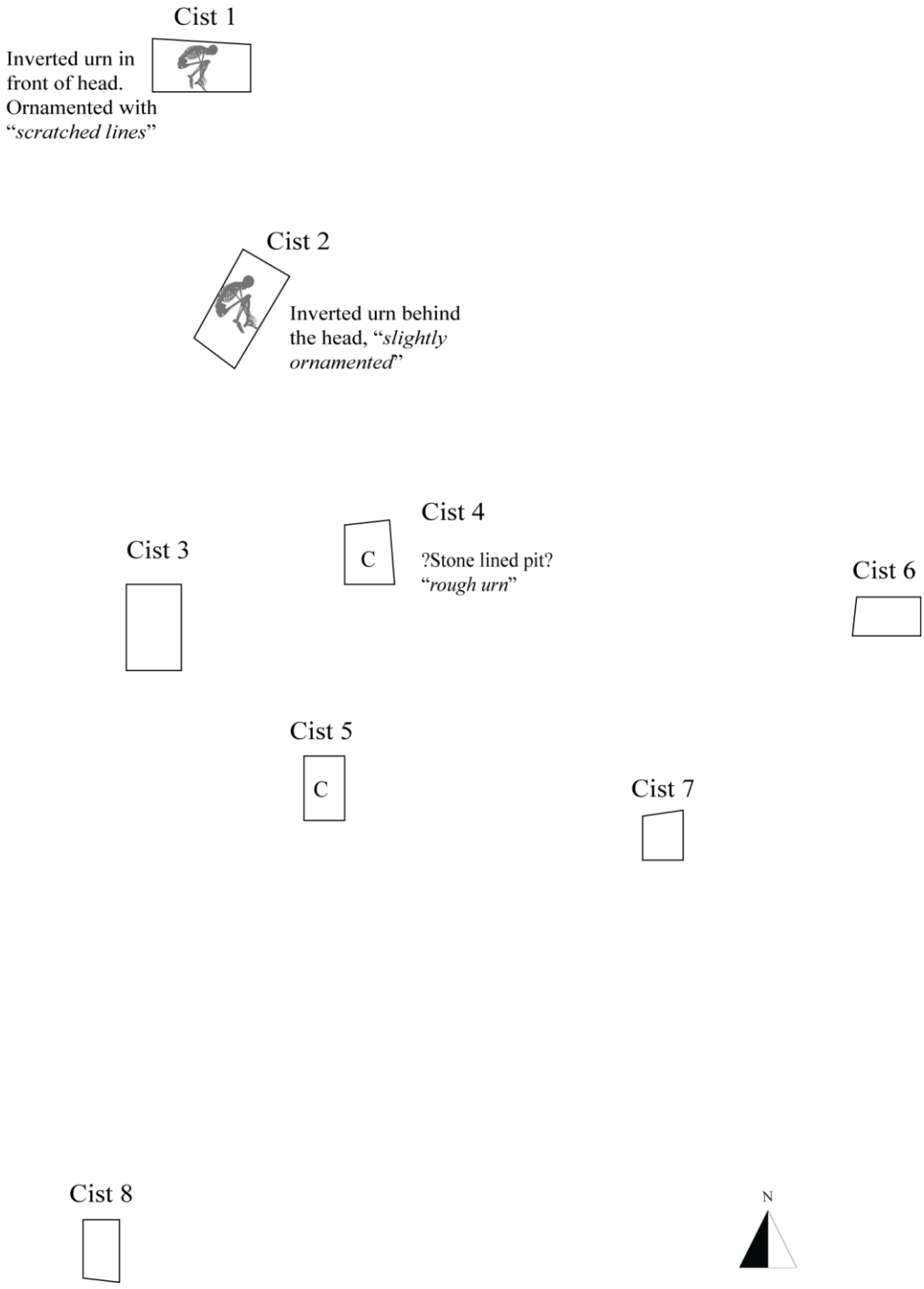

Figure 9.46: *Layout of graves in Group 2, Dalmore (SH19), Ross & Cromarty and associated artefacts: C = cremation, blank no recorded burials (after Jolly 1879)*

Funerary Contexts

Thirteen of the recorded Food Vessels were associated with cremation burials, whilst four accompanied inhumations. In the remainder of cases no information was available. 64% of the total assemblage were recovered from four cemetery sites at Dalmore (SH19), Ness Gap (SH40), Armadale (SH4) and Auchindown (SH5). Unobtrusive cists formed a minor component, with only three examples recorded including the cist from the stone circle at Carriblair (SH12) (Joass 1870: 269)[14]. Paired cists were rare with only one example recorded at the Aonach (SH50). These sites were predominantly found in coastal areas, with a further site located near a river or loch. The cists from Armadale (SH4) were predominantly orientated north/ south (Cist 1, 2) and northwest/ southeast (Cist 4). At Carriblair (SH12) and Ness Gap (SH40) cists were aligned east/ west. As with Beakers, Food Vessels were principally deposited in short-cists, with internal areas measuring 0.39-0.73m^2, with lengths of 0.5 – 1.6m. Cist 2 at Armadale (SH4) was unusually small, measuring 0.87 x 0.45m, and the excavators suggest the cist could have been a cenotaph (Peteranna 2011b:10).

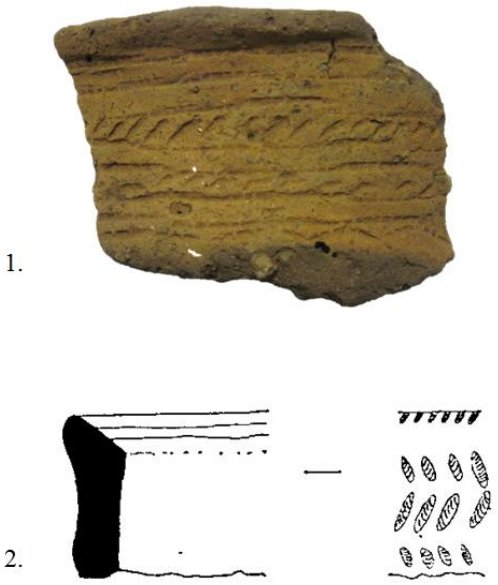

Figure 9.47: *Indeterminate Food Vessel sherds from funerary context in the South Highlands (not to scale):*

***1.** Wester Teaninich (SH15), Ross & Cromarty (The Hunterian, University of Glasgow) **2.** Auchindown (SH5), Nairn (Walker 1964)*

[14] *There is a degree of uncertainty regarding the location of the find with Lillie (PSAS 1931:258) stating the sherd was found beside the cist, whilst Joass who originally excavated the site places it within the cist (1870: 269).*

Figure 9.48: *Double-cavetto Food Vessels from funerary contexts in the South Highlands:*

Narrow upper, broad lower cavetto zone:

Key: ***1.*** *Rosemarkie (SH42), Ross & Cromarty (Author © N.M.S),* ***2.*** *Balblair Wood (SH7), Inverness-shire (Dutton et al. 2007: Illus 5)*

Broad upper, narrow lower cavetto zone:

Key: ***3.*** *Ness Gap (SH40), Ross &Cromarty (© AOC Archaeology)* ***4.*** *Easter Moy (SH24), Ross & Cromarty (© ARCH, accessed at http://www.archhighland.org.uk/news.asp?newsid=225)*

Double cavetto ridged/ lugged:

Key: ***5.*** *The Aonach (SH50), Ross & Cromarty (Author © N.M.S) (SH50)*

Squat narrow double cavetto:

Key: ***6.*** *Armadale SF24-7 (SH4), Inverness-shire (Peteranna 2011b)*

Details regarding construction were lacking for the bulk of the cists, with the notable exception of Balblair Wood (SH7), constructed from panels of rock art (Dutton *et al.* 2007) (Fig. 9.44). Similar use of rock art in cist construction is noted at other sites in the south Highlands including Easter Moy (SH24) (MacKenzie, W. 1908: 69) and Brahan Castle (Simpson, J. 1868: 29)[15]. The floor of the Balblair Wood (SH7) cist was roughly paved with sandstone slabs, the cist itself covered with a stone cairn (Dutton *et al.* 2007: 121-3).

The cist at Carriblair (SH12) may have had a stone cairn, Joass refers to the surface being "*closely paved with round stones*" (1870: 269). In four cases vessels were placed into stone-lined pits. Three probable stone-lined pits were excavated at Dalmore, Alness (SH19) (Figs. 9.45 & 9.46). The stone-lined pit burial from Ness Gap (SH40) was built of naturally rounded stones with a rough cobble floor (Marshall, N. 2011: 6). Stone-lined pits were noted at Raigmore (SH4) in association with bucket/ tub vessels (Simpson, D. 1996) (**Section 9.3.5**).

Morphology & Associations

Indeterminate

Three examples of indeterminate Food Vessels were recorded. These included a "*rough urn*" from Grave 4, Group 2, Dalmore (SH19) (Jolly 1879: 260) (Fig. 9.46). The vessel could not be located, its attribution is made based on its association with a possible stone-lined pit and cremation[16]. At Wester Teaninich (SH52) a cist was uncovered in 1963 during excavation of a drain (S. Coupar pers. comm.). The cist contained a single sherd from a probable Food Vessel. The sherd is decorated with horizontal lines of comb impressions, with incisions or impressions in between (Fig. 9.47.1). The final example from the cist at Auchindown (SH5) comprises the upper part of the vessel, with an internally bevelled rim. The exterior is decorated with whipped cord impressions arranged in a rough herringbone pattern (Fig. 9.47.2).

Double-cavetto

Double-cavetto vessels, while diverging in certain aspects of their morphology, were in terms of their dimensions consistent. Vessels were predominantly around 130-215mm tall, with a

[15] *Simpson lists several further examples of cists with cupped marked stones from within and outside Scotland (1868: 28-32)*
[16] *The possibility of the vessel being bucket-shaped cannot be ruled out.*

cluster of vessels around 152mm tall. Three broad varieties of vessels can be defined based on variations in morphology, and to a lesser degree by differences in funerary rites:

Narrow upper, broad lower-cavetto zone: The vessels from Old Manse, Rosemarkie (SH42) and Balblair Wood (SH7) featured broad lower cavetto zones (Fig. 9.47.1,2). The cavetto zones are relatively shallow, with the vessels overall having elongate proportions. The Food Vessel from Rosemarkie (SH42) is 152mm tall with a rim diameter of 132mm. The area above the shoulder is defined by a raised ridge with the broad lower zone flowing from this. The exterior of is decorated all over with whipped cord impressed herringbone (Fig. 9.47.1). In contrast the vessel from Balblair Wood (SH7) is decorated with a series of circular impressions. It is unclear if as with the Rosemarkie (SH42) Food Vessel whether the decoration extends below the shoulder. The Food Vessel from Rosemarkie (SH42) was associated with an inhumation and was found at the south end of the cist (PSAS 1904: 470). The Balblair Wood (SH7) cist could have contained a crouched inhumation (Dutton *et al.* 2007: 123). A single flint scraper was recovered from the cist (*ibid.*).

***Broad upper, narrow lower-cavetto zone*:** These formed a weakly articulated group sharing elements of morphology and chronology in common. Vessels showed variation in heights ranging from 130-215mm. Vessels typically had squat proportions except for SF10 from Armadale (SH4). The profile of the Easter Moy (SH24) vessel is defined by a raised cordon, whilst SF10, SF11 from Armadale (SH4) and the Food Vessel from Ness Gap (SH40) have sharply defined profiles. Decoration frequently extends across the whole of the body (Fig. 9.47.3-4). The zones of the Easter Moy (SH24) Food Vessel are defined by false relief, with additional bands below the shoulder. The remainder of the body is decorated with short horizontal incisions. The upper zone of the Ness Gap (SH40) vessel is decorated with twisted cord in herringbone patterns extending onto the internal rim bevel. The lower half is decorated with vertical rows of semi-circular cord impressions, dividing the lower half into a series of narrow panels.

SF11 from Armadale (SF4) differed in many respects from the previous examples. The first being the presence of imperforate lugs creating a stop ridge. The shoulder is simple, lacking the slight raised ridge of the Ness Gap vessel (SH40). The exterior is decorated all over with an incised herringbone pattern. In contrast SF10 sports a broad but shallow upper cavetto zone, with the distinction between the zone and rim being poorly defined. The upper zone is decorated with panels of vertical twisted cord impressions, with a vertical herringbone design of nail impressions between. The area below and above the shoulder is decorated with

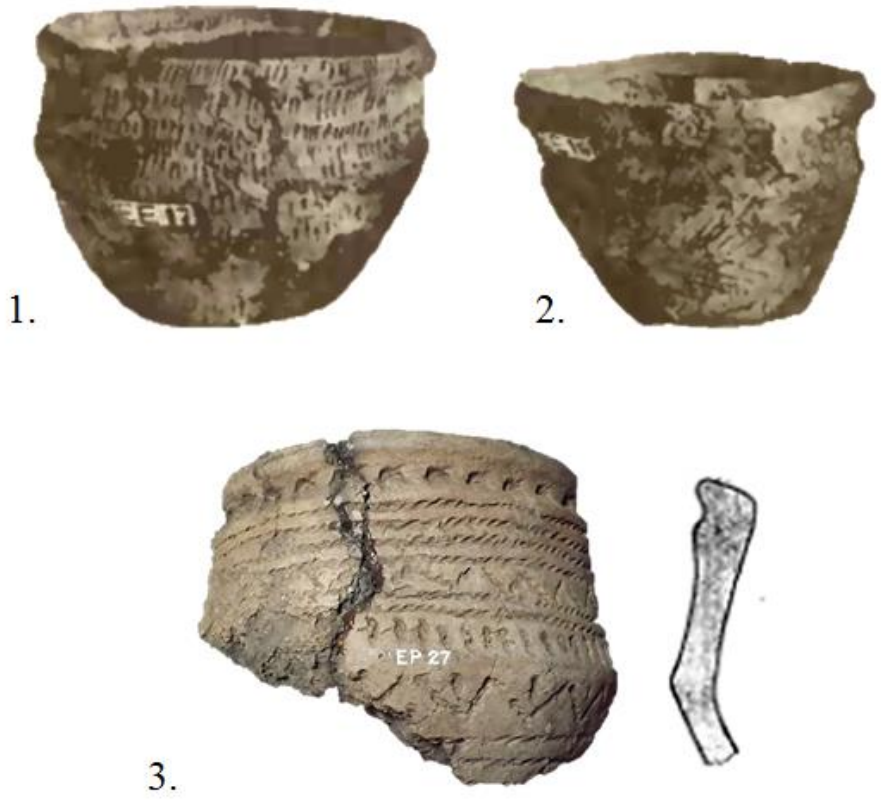

Figure 9.49: *Single upper-cavetto zone Food Vessels from funerary contexts in the South Highlands (not to scale):*

Key: ***1.*****,** ***2****. Dalmore (SH19), Ross & Cromarty (Abercromby Plate LIII: 390, 391)*
3. *Carriblair (SH12), Ross & Cromarty (Lillie 1931: Fig 2, photo Author © N.M.S)*

horizontal lines of cord impressions, whilst the area below is as with the Ness Gap (SH40) vessel divided into vertical panels, created through vertical twisted cord, with fingernail impressions in between, replicating the pattern of the upper zone on a larger scale.

Contextual information for these vessels is limited, SF11 was not found with remains (Peteranna 2011), whilst the Ness Gap (SH40) vessel was found in a stone-lined pit, orientated E/W, associated with a cremation (Marshall, N. 2011: 8). SF10 from Cist 1, Armadale (SH4) was found with cremated remains. Information for the Easter Moy (SH24) vessel was limited, but charred wood was reputed to have been found from within the cist (MacKenzie, W. 1908: 68). Four small flints were found in association with the vessel, but it is unclear if these are additional grave goods or flint flakes that became incorporated in the disturbed fill (*ibid.*). Given the subtle differences in deposition and form this group could incorporate two different types, potentially reflecting on temporal and spatial differences.

Double-cavetto, ridged/ lugged: The vessel from the Aonach (SH50) differs in that the lower cavetto zone is divided into two with a raised ridge and a series of alternating lugs. The upper zone is broad, with the rim having a shallow internal bevel. Externally the rim has a club like appearance, like those recorded on Food Vessels from the North Highlands. The exterior of the vessel is decorated with twisted cord arranged in a herringbone motif. The decoration extends to below the shoulder but does not reach to the base of the vessel. The vessel was placed in front of the head. The orientation and posture of the burial recalls those associated with females and Beakers, which are frequently buried on their right-hand side, with the vessel in front of the head (*cf.* **Chapter 11**). This pattern was noted with at least two Food Vessels from the North Highlands as well. In association with the vessel was a small fragment of bronze, possibly the remains of a pin (Watson 1889: 139). Based on these patterns of association it can be suggested that the buried individual was female[17].

***Squat, narrow double-cavettos*:** Only one example was recorded from Armadale, SF24-7, with rounded squat like appearance, rounded lower body with a slightly pedestaled base (Sheridan 2011b). The proportions in contrast to the previous examples are 'bowl' like with a rim of 155mm and a height of 124mm. The rim is bevelled internally with a shallow external

Figure 9.50: *Vessel from Cist 8, Group 1 Dalmore (SH19), Ross &Cromarty (Anderson 1886: Fig 50) (not to scale)*

[17] *Assigning sex based on grave goods is problematic, but a recent examination of grave goods from England suggests that there is a strong association between females and awls/ pins, although these objects can be found in male burials (Woodward & Hunter, J. 2015:521) (see* ***App. H3****)*

bevel. The divisions between the neck and body are marked by low cordons, with evidence for applied lugs in the lower zone. A variety of decorative techniques are employed including comb impressions and false relief. The decoration is roughly divided into four zones of horizontal comb impressions with zig-zag false relief above and below (*ibid.)*. The style of the vessel is reminiscent of bowls from Ireland (*ibid.;* Brindley 2007) and southwest and southeast Scotland (Young 1951) (Fig. 2.6). These connections are further explored in **Chapter 11**. The pot was associated with a cremation burial and a single flint flake. The tripartite form closely overlaps with the squat double-cavetto vessels recorded from the North Highlands (Table 8.8)

Single upper-cavetto

Four examples of single upper-cavetto Food Vessels were recorded, including two from the cemetery at Dalmore (SH19) (Fig. 9.49). Whilst these two vessels could not be traced they are illustrated in Abercromby's 1912 corpus (Plate LIII: 390, 391). Detailed information on the height and rim of the vessels is lacking. The larger of the two was found inverted covering burnt bones (Jolly 1879: 257). The Carriblair (SH12) vessel has a distinct carination and a broad single cavetto zone. The rim sports a shallow bevel, with a raised moulding below. The narrow groove between the moulding and the rim is infilled with a series of loop impressions. The surfaces are primarily decorated with horizontal cord impressions with zig-zags above, creating a pattern reminiscent of that on SF24-7 from Armadale (SH4).

SF50 from Armadale (SH4) has an elongate profile, in contrast to the shorter profiles of other single upper-cavetto vessels. The rim and height were equal, measuring 155mm. The upper half of the vessel is dominated by a broad shallow cavetto zone and is decorated all over with impressed decoration (Sheridan 2011b). The overall form and shape is reminiscent of Food Vessels recorded from Ardnave (Fig. 2.35). Given the fragmentary nature of the Carriblair (SH12) vessel and the lack of further detail regarding the Dalmore (SH19) vessels, additional subdivision as in the case of double-cavetto vessels is not possible. Whilst SF50 from Armadale (SH4) appears to have been associated with an inhumation, the remaining vessels were found with cremations. Additional grave goods were only recorded at Armadale (SH4), with a fragment of a stone bracer and a flint flake recorded from the construction cut fill (Peteranna 2011b: 28). The stone bracer was worn and had likely been curated, possibly used as a pendant before final deposition (Saville 2011).

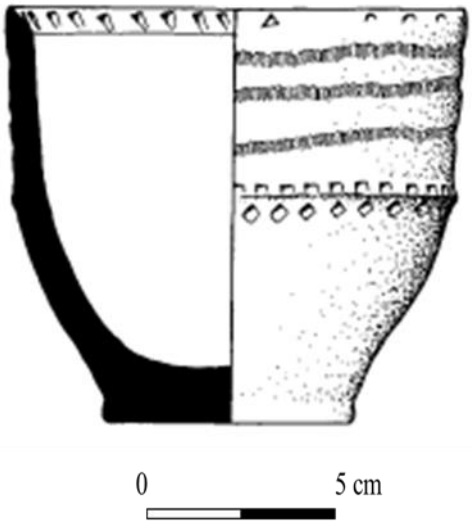

Figure 9.51: *Simple Food Vessel from Raigmore (SH44), Inverness-shire. n.b. the whipped cord impressions on the lower half are missing in the illustration (Simpson, D. 1996: Illus 18)*

High-shouldered

Only one high-shouldered vessel was recorded from Cist 8, Group 1, Dalmore (SH19). The vessel measuring 350mm is the largest of the Food Vessels. The vessel has a sharp shoulder and a near vertical neck, the rim sports a slight inward projection (Fig. 9.50). The flat top of the rim is decorated with incised triangles, whilst the neck is decorated with applied cordons forming a zig-zag, with applied pellets on the lower angles of the chevrons. The chevrons are bordered with an upper and lower cordon decorated in relief. Below the rim are three holes, two of which are likely ancient (Cowie, T. 1978: 133). The vessel contained "*a few calcined bones*" and a hollow bone cylinder (*c.* 22.22 mm long), with three equal curved grooves (Jolly 1879: 256-7). The function of the cylinder is unclear, but bone cylinders have been recorded from other Early Bronze Age cremations (*cf.* Woodward & Hunter, J. 2015: 114-117).

The overall form and decoration of the vessel is comparable to other examples of Encrusted Urns from Britain and Ireland. The vessel closely overlaps with examples placed by Brindley in her Stage 3 (*c.* 1830 - *c.* 1700 BC), defined by vertical or near vertical necks and small shoulders (2007: 197). The presence of this vessel alongside other finds of Beakers suggest that the cemetery at Dalmore (SH19) was in use for a lengthy period. If the Beakers do belong to the site they likely represent the earliest deposit, whilst the Encrusted Urn relates to the later phases.

Simple

A single simple Food Vessel was recovered from Cist I at Raigmore (SH44). The cist comprised a stone-lined pit, but no trace of human remains was found. The vessel has a roughly u-shaped profile with a pedestalled base (Fig. 9.51). The vessel has a slight ridge separating the upper and lower half of the body, defined by a series of square/ diamond impressions, creating an almost false relief effect. Similar impressions occur on the exterior of the rim, with further triangular impressions on the interior of the rim. The exterior is decorated with a series of whipped cord impressions, arranged horizontally on the upper part of the body, and diagonally below the shoulder. These lower impressions are not illustrated in the original drawing. The vessel measures 110mm tall, with a rim diameter of 98mm.

Ribbed-vessel

A single example of a ribbed-vessel was recorded from the Mains of Kilcoy (SH39). The vessel has bowl like proportions akin to those of Armadale SF24. And is comparable to ridged variants identified by Burgess (1980: 88) (Fig. 2.9). The nature of the burial is unclear, but the cist contained fragments of burnt wood (North 1909: 131). It is possible that the burial is a

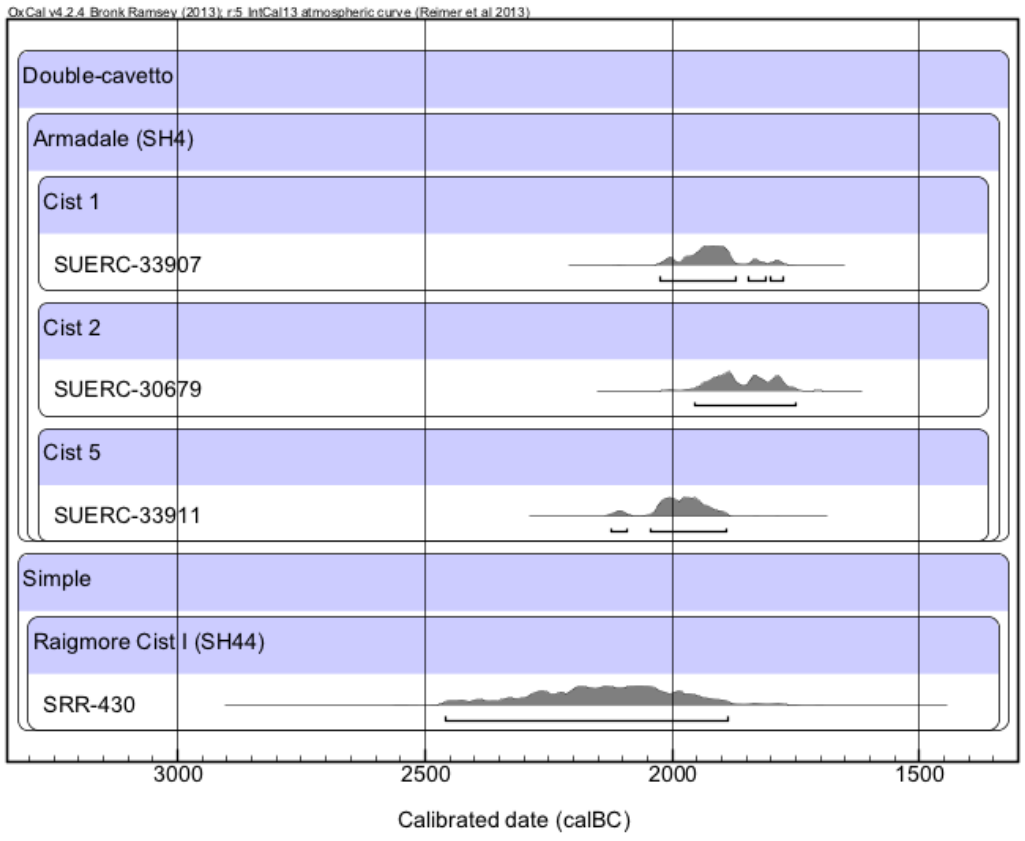

Figure 9.52: *Calibrated radiocarbon dates for Food Vessels from funerary contexts in the South Highlands (see **App. F4** for details)*

cremation. The ribs of the vessels are decorated with an ?incised? herringbone pattern, with the upper zones infilled with horizontal lines of twisted cord. The area below the shoulder is decorated with narrow horizontal bands with diagonal infill.

Chronology

Radiocarbon dates for Food Vessels are limited to Armadale (SH4) and the simple vessel from Raigmore (SH44), in the remainder of cases dating is reliant on associated artefacts or analogy with other regions. The dates for the cemetery at Armadale (SH4) suggest that the earliest deposit at the cemetery was Cist 5, but as noted there is tentative evidence for earlier activity on site (Krus & Peteranna 2016: 694). The cremation from Cist 5 was dated to 2130-1890 cal BC (SUERC-33911) (**App. F4**), with the cremations associated with SF11 and SF10 closely overlapping (Fig. 9.52). The date for SF50 is a notable outlier and likely derives from intrusive material in the cists (A. Sheridan pers. comm.). The available dates for Balblair Wood (SH7) similarly derive from late intrusive material (**App. F4**). The date from Raigmore Cist I (SH44) unfortunately has a wide standard deviation of +/- 100 years, dating to 2460-1880 cal BC (SRR-430) (**App. F4**).

The high-shouldered vessel from Dalmore (SH19) finds parallel in Brindley's Stage 3 Encrusted Urns. Brindley places these *c.* 1830-1700 BC (2007: 272). These dates overlap in part with the general currency of Scottish Encrusted Urns (Sheridan 2007a: 169). The overall chronology of the cemetery is unclear, but the site incorporates several inhumations and cremations, along with a mix of settings, suggesting a potentially lengthy chronology. The latest phases of the site could be represented by cremation burials centred in Group 1, with the inverted vessels and the larger high-shouldered vessel (Fig. 9.45). A single cremation is noted in Group 2, with a fragment of a vessel, but the precise nature of this is unstated (Jolly 1879: 260). The dating of the remaining vessels remains ambiguous but as seen in the North Highlands Food Vessels as accompaniment to inhumations appear to occur from around the late 23rd century, possibly overlapping with the date of SF24 from Armadale (SH4). This implies that several categories of burial were employed at the same time, the differences in burial rite instead being related to regional preference. These themes are explored further in **Chapter 11**.

Summary

In contrast to Beakers, Food Vessels are limited in number and associated with a mix of cremation and inhumation practice. Where associated with cremation burials vessels were frequently employed as accompaniments rather than as containers. Only two vessels were employed as containers for human remains, both deriving from the cemetery at Dalmore (SH19. Based on analogy with similar vessels, the Encrusted Urn from Dalmore (SH19) likely belongs to the latest stage of the period under study (Sheridan 2007a: 169). The shift to smaller settings can be linked to the emergence of cremation practices with stone-lined pits, becoming common. The later phases of the Dalmore (SH19) cemetery are defined by stone-lined pits. Prior to this Food Vessels were deployed in similar ways to Beakers. In the few cases where orientation and vessel placement are known these overlap with Beakers. At the Aonach (SH50) the vessel was placed in front of the skull, recalling the placement of Beakers, but little else can be added owing to the limitations of the evidence. Food Vessels in contrast to Beakers tended to be grouped into cemeteries, although examples from unobtrusive cists were recorded. While variations in form were observed, notably in relation to double-cavetto vessels, it is difficult to relate these to variations in funerary practices due to limitations of contextual information. As noted above towards the end of the 3rd millennium there is an increased preference for larger vessels in association with cremations. This is clearly observed in contexts where large Food Vessels are employed as containers for cremated remains, contrasting with their earlier role as accompaniments.

9.3.4 Simple & Waisted squat vessels

Only one example of a waisted bowl was recorded from the study area at Seafield West (SH48).

Funerary contexts

The vessel from Seafield West (SH48) was deposited in a plank coffin [206]. The coffin, measuring 1.4 x 0.6m, was only visible as a roughly rectangular organic stain in the ground (Cressey & Sheridan 2003: 51) (Fig. 9.53). No human remains were recovered, but the excavators suggest based on analogy with other log-coffin burials that it could have held a crouched burial (*ibid.*). From the southeast corner of the coffin came a single waisted bowl standing upright along with four flint artefacts found in a cluster near the pot.

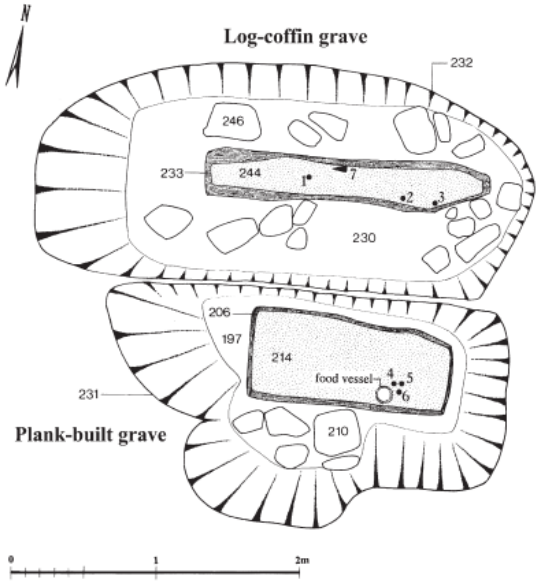

Figure 9.53: *Log coffin burials from Seafield West (SH47), Inverness-shire (Cressey & Sheridan 2003: Illus 5)*

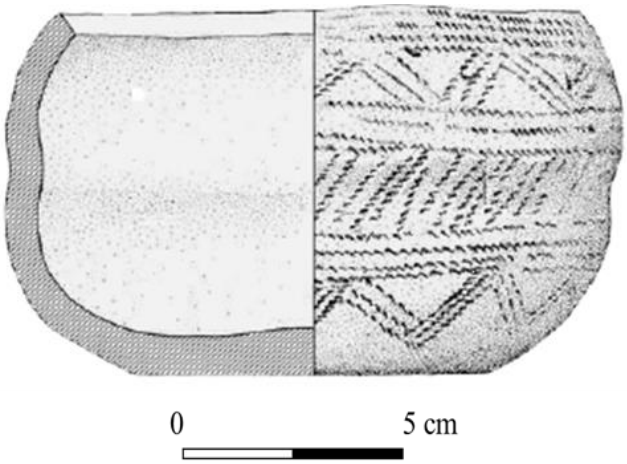

Figure 9.54: *Waisted bowl from Seafield West (SH47), Inverness-shire (Cressey & Sheridan 2003: Illus 10)*

Morphology & Associations

The small waisted bowl from Seafield West (SH47) measures 95mm high, with a rim diameter of 128-38mm (Sheridan 2003: 64). The profile is waisted at the mid-point and the rim is internally bevelled. The exterior of the vessel is decorated with twisted cord arranged in three zones (Fig. 9.54). The upper zone is decorated with chevron designs, bordered by horizontal impressions above and below. This pattern is repeated in the lower zone.

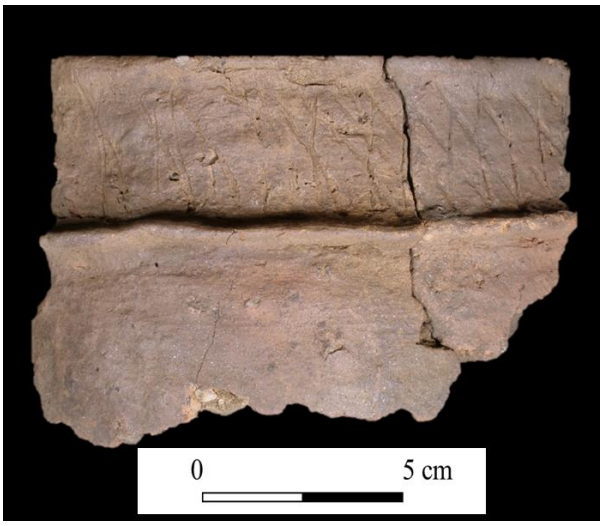

Figure 9.55: *Cordoned Urn sherd from Dalmore Farm (SH20), Ross & Cromarty (Ballin Smith unpub)*

Chronology

Whilst no date is available for the finds, it is suggested that the bowl could date to *c.* 2000 BC. (Sheridan 2003: 65). The vessel finds close parallel to Irish examples, including those associated with Brindley's Stage 1 dated to 2160-2080 cal BC (Fig 2.8).

9.3.5 Summary

A range of vessels were employed in funerary contexts, within this there are several patterns. The first is the concentration of Beakers centred around the Inverness region. This region correspondingly had a lower number of other vessel types, whilst further north Food Vessels are widespread. The precise chronology of these changes is difficult to determine, but a degree of overlap seems probable. Whilst several vessels, notably bucket/ tub and later Cordoned Urns were associated with cremation, Beakers and Food Vessels were commonly deployed as part of inhumation burials. Later Food Vessels are, in contrast to smaller early examples, increasingly associated with cremation burials, acting as primarily as accompaniments. In two cases vessels were employed as containers similar to Cordoned Urns and bucket/ tub vessel.

Changes in vessel type can be related in part to changes in burial practices, with cremation burials favouring smaller settings, including stone-lined pits, in which vessels act as containers for the remains. Later Cordoned Urns show a preference for simple unlined pits as at Dalmore Farm (SH20) and Seafield West (SH48). The Cordoned Urn from the latter was undecorated, while the neck of the vessel from Dalmore Farm (SH20) was decorated with incised lattice

(Fig. 9.55). Cemetery sites were common, often with complex histories, tending to orbit around a central early feature. At Raigmore (SH44) the ring ditch and central burials were primary in the sequence. A similar sequence may occur at Dalmore (SH19), with the Encrusted Urn belonging to the latest phase of the site.

In this broad-brush picture, it is possible to map changes in vessel type against changes in the wider assemblage. These include changes in wider networks, with different ideas and materials moving across networks over time. As highlighted an important area of change is the role of the pot in the burial. Vessels as seen in other parts of the study area move from accompaniment to containers for the dead. This could be argued to represent charges in ideas regarding the dead and the body. Crucially these finds represent a small percentage of the overall burials – unaccompanied burials, including those recorded at Clava Cairns and dagger burials have been recorded from across the area. The relationship of different categories of burial considered in **Chapter 11**.

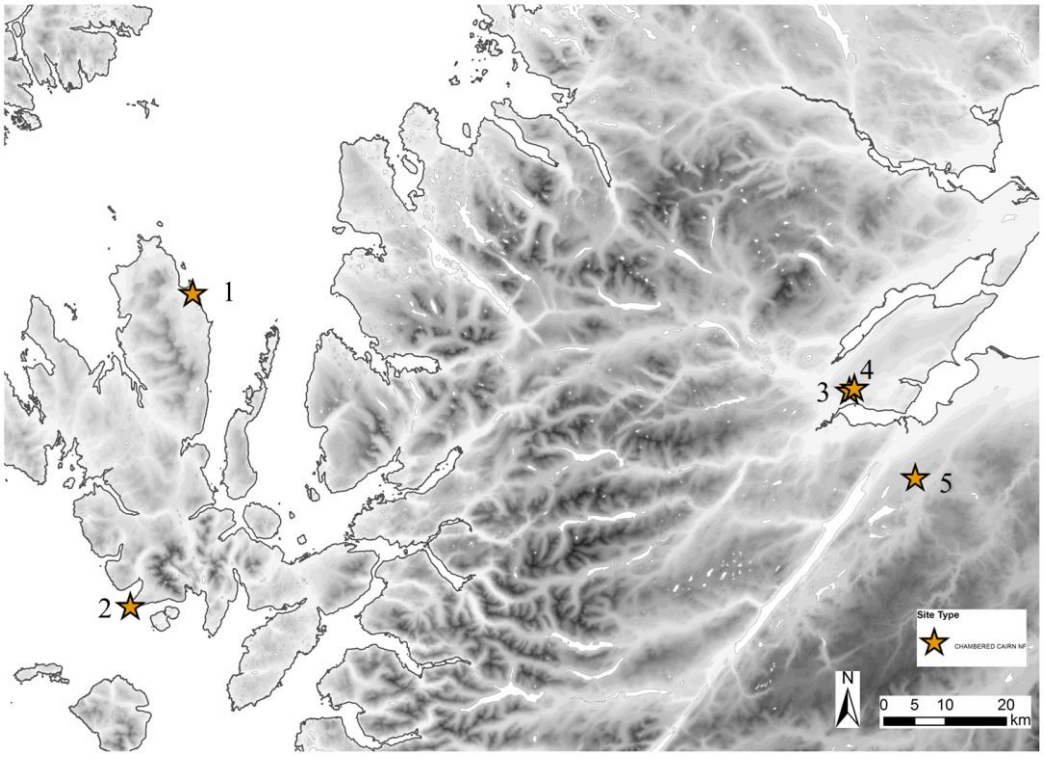

Figure 9.56: *Distribution of non-funerary deposits at chambered cairns in the South Highlands:*

Key: ***1.*** *Cadha Riach, Garrafad (SH11), Inverness-shire* ***2.*** *Rudh an' Dunain (SH47), Inverness-shire,* ***3.*** *Kilcoy South (SH34), Ross & Cromarty* ***4.*** *Mains of Kilcoy (SH34), Inverness-shire,* ***5.*** *Tomfat (SH51), Inverness-shire*

9.4 Chambered cairns: Non-funerary

9.4.1 Nature of the evidence

Later 3rd millennium ceramics were recovered from five chambered cairns (Fig. 9.56). These deposits cannot be explicitly related to a funerary function. These were primarily located in Ross and Cromarty, the bulk of the finds stemming from the Kilcoy tombs. In Inverness and Skye only one example each was noted. The pottery primarily comprised fragments of Beakers, ranging from whole vessels to single sherds. These deposits are considered as before on a site by site basis rather than by form group, owing to the fragmentary nature of much of the material.

9.4.2 Cadha Riach, Garrafad (SH11)

Contexts

A circular turf covered mound was excavated in 1970 by a local school teacher. The overall form of the monument is unclear, but comprises a roughly d-shaped chamber, with an overall diameter of 7.5m. The monument has been heavily robbed out, but it is suggested that an entrance passage may have existed on the east side. There is an outer ring of stones, suggesting a kerb cairn[18] (Close-Brooks & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1980: 101). The various pottery sherds were recovered from a trench in the south of the chamber.

Artefacts

The pottery recovered from the chamber comprised four sherds, representing at least two vessels (Close-Brooks & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1980: 101). Whilst the vessels are described as deriving from Beakers their precise form cannot be stated with confidence and could derive from Food Vessels. The sherds (20-21) are decorated by incision creating several zones. The vessels are thick walled and relatively coarse (*ibid*). The remaining sherds comprise the rim and wall sherds of a further coarse thick-walled vessel. The HER entry for the site refers to the presence of cremated bone[19], but the degree of association between this and the ceramic

[18] Information on the nature of the monument is derived from online records at the Highland HER.
[19] These cremated remains are not mentioned by Close-Brooks and Ritchie (1980)

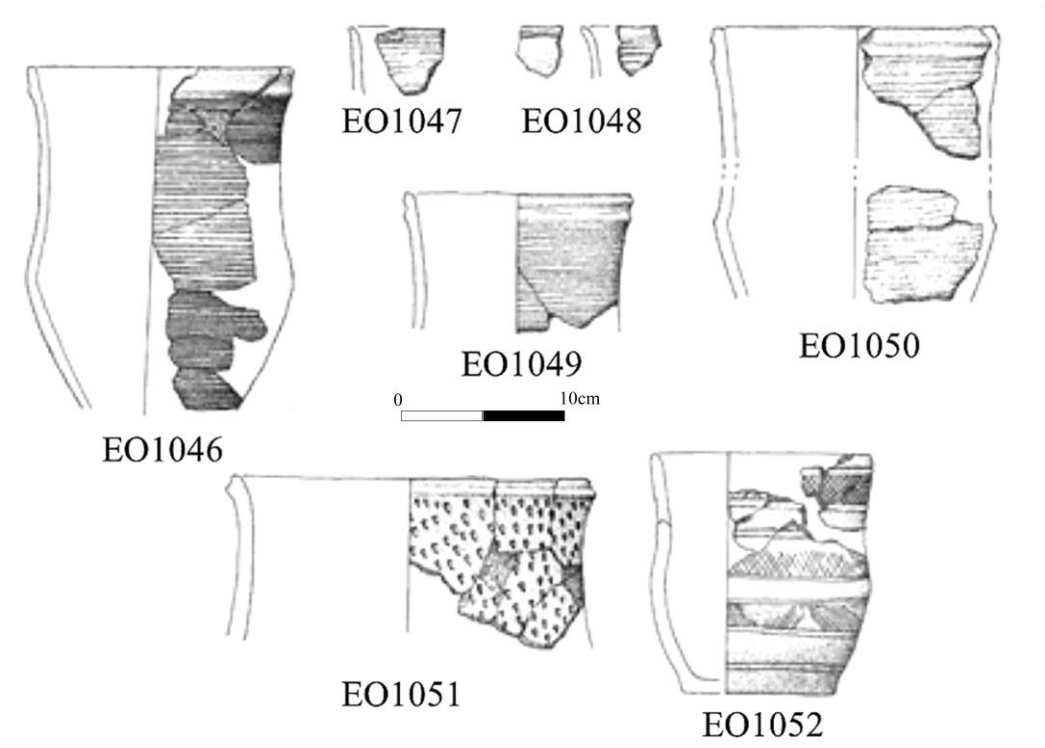

Figure 9.57: *Sherds from Kilcoy South (SH34), Ross & Cromarty (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 2001: Figure 32)*

finds is unclear. It could be argued that rather than a chambered cairn, the remains equate to a large cist, akin to that at Coille Grulla (SH15).

Chronology

No dates are available for the tomb, but a date post 2300 BC based on the dating of similar vessels from Skye would seem likely.

9.4.3 Kilcoy South (SH34)

Contexts

The chambered cairn is roughly polygonal with a concave front with a deep forecourt defined by projecting horns (Woodham 1956: 86). The chamber is divided into three with a narrow passage providing access. The walls of the chamber are constructed out of orthostats placed on edge. Patches of charcoal were recorded on the floor of the passage, ante-chamber and main chamber. Except for the ante-chamber and passage these deposits were overlain by a layer of sand. This deposit was itself sealed by a layer of rubble which represent the remains of

collapsed walling or alternatively an attempt to fill the hollow created by the loss of the chamber roof (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 2001: 70).

Artefacts

Sherds of several Beakers were intermixed in the infilling of the chamber recorded primarily from above the sand layer in the centre of the main chamber, probably associated with the stony filling. Material within these later fillings are likely to have been deposited in two stages, based on the typology of the vessels (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 2001: 71). It is unclear if the vessels were part of a structured deposition or mixed into the stony fill that was used to back fill the chamber (*ibid.*). Typologically the short-necked Beaker, EO1052, likely postdates the remaining low-carinated Beakers. It is probable that this vessel relates to the stony infill, with the low-carinated vessels occurring below this deposit (Henshall & Ritchie, J.N.G. 2001: 153). EO1052 is decorated in three zones by incision, while the neck is decorated with three slight cordons between grooves. The upper band between two slight cordons comprises a fine lattice pattern, while the lattice below is rougher. The final band comprising multiple outlined triangles truncated by horizontal borders, reminiscent of the motifs found on the Achavanich (NH4) Beaker. The base of the vessel showed signs of scorching suggesting possible use prior to deposition. It is probable that these vessels derive from domestic contexts, representing as seen at Holm of Papa Westray North (ORK13) the use of domestic refuse as infilling material. This as noted by Henshall and Ritchie need not be for ritual purposes but a practical need to infill a potentially dangerous hollow (2001: 71; *cf.* Barber 1997: 7-8 for further discussion of closure deposits)

Among the early vessels are three examples of low-carinated Beakers decorated with all over cord/ comb decoration (Fig. 9.57). EO1046 sports an elongate profile, with a sub rim cordon. The rim is slightly bevelled, whilst the outer surfaces are decorated with narrow bands of fine horizontal comb impressions. EO1049 is of similar form, but sports two cordons and is decorated with twisted cord, rim diameter *c.* 120mm. Whilst EO1050 is similar the cord impressions are more widely spaced. The two rim sherds, EO1047 and EO1048, could have come from similar vessels, although EO1048 sports two rows of cord impressions on the inner lip. EO1051 is comparable in form to the other vessels, but the decoration comprises triangular stabbed impressions. The size and decoration of these recall large vessels from Glenluce and Allt Chrisal (**Section 2.5.2**), and the recently excavated examples from Culduthel Farm (SH17)

Figure 9.58: *EO 961 from Kilcoy, Carn Glas (SH33), Ross & Cromarty (Author © NMS)*

Chronology

Typologically the short-necked Beaker can be assigned to a period post 2300 BC. On the whole it can be argued that the low-carinated Beakers form a coherent group, probably dating to the early phase of Beaker use. The similarity between these vessels and those from Culduthel Farm (SH17) could be cited in support of an early date for these. It is possible as well that the low-carinated vessels derive from non-funerary contexts (none of the vessels were directly related to burials), representing an early non-funerary use of low-carinated Beakers in the region.

9.4.4 Kilcoy Carn Glas (SH33)

Contexts

Excavated by Woodham in 1958, the site comprises a large cairn roughly 70ft in diameter. Within the mound is a double chambered structure. The entrance passage to the structure has in part been removed through robbing activity. The floor of the chamber was composed of clay, covered throughout by a layer of sand with occasional flecks of charcoal (Woodham 1959: 107). Modern activity at the site had disturbed the layers within the chamber, but several artefacts were recorded, including sherds of a Beaker from the sand layer.

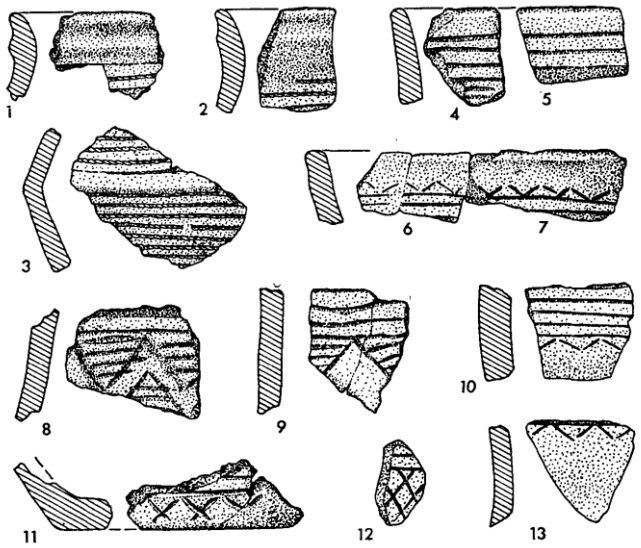

Figure 9.59: *Beaker sherds from Elishader (SH26), Inverness-shire (Close-Brooks & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1980: Fig. 11) (not to scale)*

Artefacts

The exterior of the Beaker is decorated with fine comb impressions arranged in lattice patterns with horizontal borders., the use of the lattice pattern recalls the later short-necked Beaker from Kilcoy South (SH34). Sherds of a second probable Beaker were recovered, decorated with random fingernail impressions. Both vessels derive from the sand layer, although the deposits within the chamber had been disturbed. Alongside the Beaker finds were three barbed and tanged arrowheads.

9.4.5 Tomfat (SH51)

Contexts

Excavated in 1966 by Woodham the site represents the remains of a badly damaged chambered cairn. From the interior several sherds of pottery were recovered from the floor or an inch above the surface (Woodham 1966: 38).

Artefacts

Six small thin walled sherds were recovered. The sherds include a possible fragment from a neck. These sherds have previously been described as undecorated Beaker, but the sherds are too undiagnostic to attribute to a specific group.

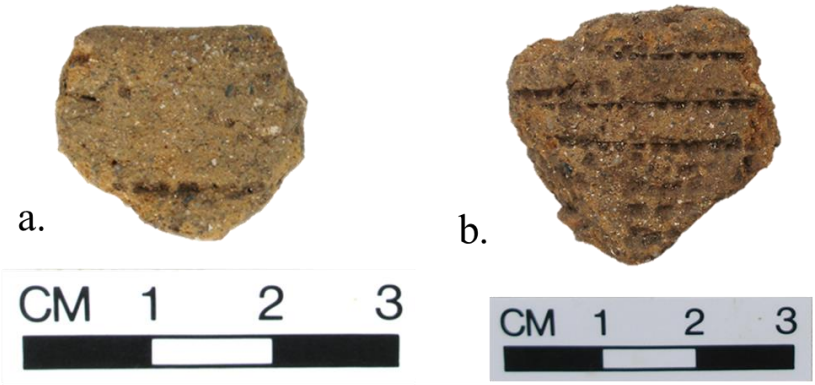

Figure 9.60: *Sherds from Easter Raitts (SH25), Inverness-shire (© Ballin Smith)*

9.4.6 Summary

Overall, the material from chambered cairns is difficult to interpret. Whilst Kilcoy South (SH34) provides several additional examples of low-carinated Beakers the nature and function of these is unclear. It cannot be stated if they were deliberately added or represent rubbish intermixed with the fill. The latter hypothesis at present seems the most likely scenario. In the case of the remaining sites the circumstances of deposition are unclear, but there is a general trend for the infilling of chambered cairns, but as noted this could have been undertaken for practical reasons. The style of the Carn Glas (SH33) sherds suggests a date post 2300 BC for this deposition, while at Kilcoy South (SH34) deposition could have occurred as early as 2400 BC with a later phase of deposition *c.* 2300 BC.

9.5. Sites of uncertain function

9.5.1 Elishader Croft no. 7 (SH26)

Contexts

A variety of Beaker sherds have been recorded from a mound at Elishader (SH26). The precise nature of the mound is unclear, but "*one large rectangular boulder and some smaller stones lie in the hole where the sherds were found*" (Close-Brooks & Ritchie, J.N.G. 1979: 99).

Artefacts

Among the assemblage of sherds are examples of early Beakers, including a distinct carinated sherd and two rim sherds with sub-rim cordons. A third AOC sherd is illustrated by Close-

Brooks & Ritchie (1980: Fig 11) (Fig. 9.59). The sub-rim cordon sherds likely stem from the same vessel along with the carinated body sherd implying at least one low-carinated Beaker. The remaining sherds appear to derive from later Beakers decorated with bands of horizontal incisions, lattices and zig-zags. Among these are three sherds with geometric motifs noted previously on the vessel from Cnocan Na Gobhar (SH14). This motif is not noted elsewhere in the study area and could in this context be particular to Skye.

9.5.2 Easter Raitts (SH25)

At Easter Raitts (SH25) residual 3rd millennium pottery was recorded from contexts sealed by 18th century activity. The disturbed nature of the deposits makes attributing a function to the site difficult (Lelong 1999: 51; Ballin Smith 2004). Six sherds of a probable short-necked Beaker vessel were recovered (Ballin Smith unpub). The vessel stood around 120 to 230mm high "*with a distinct neck set above the body*" (*ibid*). The outer surfaces were decorated with bands of fine comb decoration, horizontal and possibly vertical (Fig. 9.56b), with the decoration ending below of the rim.

9.6 Summary: regional characteristics

As in the North Highlands all the principal parent groups, as defined in **Chapter 4**, are represented, with Beakers forming most of the overall assemblage. These were primarily recorded from funerary contexts but were noted in domestic and chambered cairn contexts. Food Vessels while present were restricted primarily to Ross and Cromarty. This can be contrasted with the preference for late Beaker forms in Inverness and Nairn, suggesting marked regional differences from *c.* 2200BC. In the following section I will summarise the primary characteristics of each parent group, providing a summary of the key aspects of each group.

Beakers

While primarily recorded from funerary sites Beakers were noted in several domestic contexts. These included examples of probable early Beaker types at Culduthel Farm (SH17) and Ardnamurchan (SH2, SH3). In addition to these early Beakers were noted at Elishader (SH26) and Kilcoy South (SH34), The form of the latter overlaps with the vessels from Culduthel Farm (SH17). In a funerary context early Beakers were noted at New Broadford (SH41) and Beechwood Park (SH8). If an early date is accepted for those found in non-funerary contexts

this could be taken as suggesting an early use of Beakers in a domestic context. The dating evidence from Culduthel Farm (SH17) (Fig. 9.13), would seem to support a degree of overlap, but there are problems with the stratigraphy and degree of association. Given the recovery of early Beaker types from Eweford in late contexts (**Section 2.2**), a degree of caution should be exercised in assuming this (*cf.* Needham 2005: 186). The probable early Beaker finds from Skye and Ardnamurchan are one of several such examples from along the west coast of Scotland (Fitzpatrick 2015: 50-2). Other examples include the finds from the Kilmartin valley as seen at Upper Largie (see **Section 2.1**)

Form and height information was limited to the vessel from Kilcoy South (SH34) which is 228mm tall, and New Broadford (SH41) *c*. 119mm tall. Rim diameters ranged from 150-280mm. Large Beakers are common and likely fulfilled a variety of storage roles (Brindley 2004: 326). Vessels typically had marked carination's as at Elishader (SH26), Culduthel Farm (SH17) and Kilcoy South (SH34). At New Broadford (SH41) the Beaker lacked a clearly defined profile, but this could be related to its manufacture. Sub-rim cordons were frequent being noted at several sites including Elishader (SH26) and Kilcoy South (SH34). The overlap and between these vessels and later Beakers from the area is unclear, although as at Culduthel Farm (SH17), Kilcoy South (SH34), Elishader (SH26), later Beaker forms were deposited at the same site, but this need not suggest direct continuity. Instead a potential disparity between the two phases could exist, reflecting on the tempo and nature of networks during the period (Case 2001: 367).

S-profile Beakers were common with short-necked Beakers making up a significant percentage of the overall assemblage. These were primarily recorded from funerary contexts, but probable examples of short-necked vessels were recorded at Easter Raitts (SH25). S-profile Beakers typically had heights between 120-205mm (the bulk falling between 120-158mm), overlapping with the recorded height range of s-profile Beakers from the North Highlands (**Section 8.3.2**). Rim diameters were between 98-140mm. In terms of decoration s-profile and short-necked beakers showed a preference for incision and comb decoration. Decoration on both types was frequently arranged in 3- 4 zones, with a high degree of overlap in motifs. Metope panels were recorded on both short-necked and s-profile Beakers. In this light, it appears that the primary axis of variability is in the definition of the neck. The Beaker from Blackstand (SH9) illustrates the potential variability of this process, occupying a grey area between necked and sinuous. In other parts of north east Scotland, the distinctions in form have been linked to aspects of age and sex (**Chapter 2**). S-profile vessels from the study area

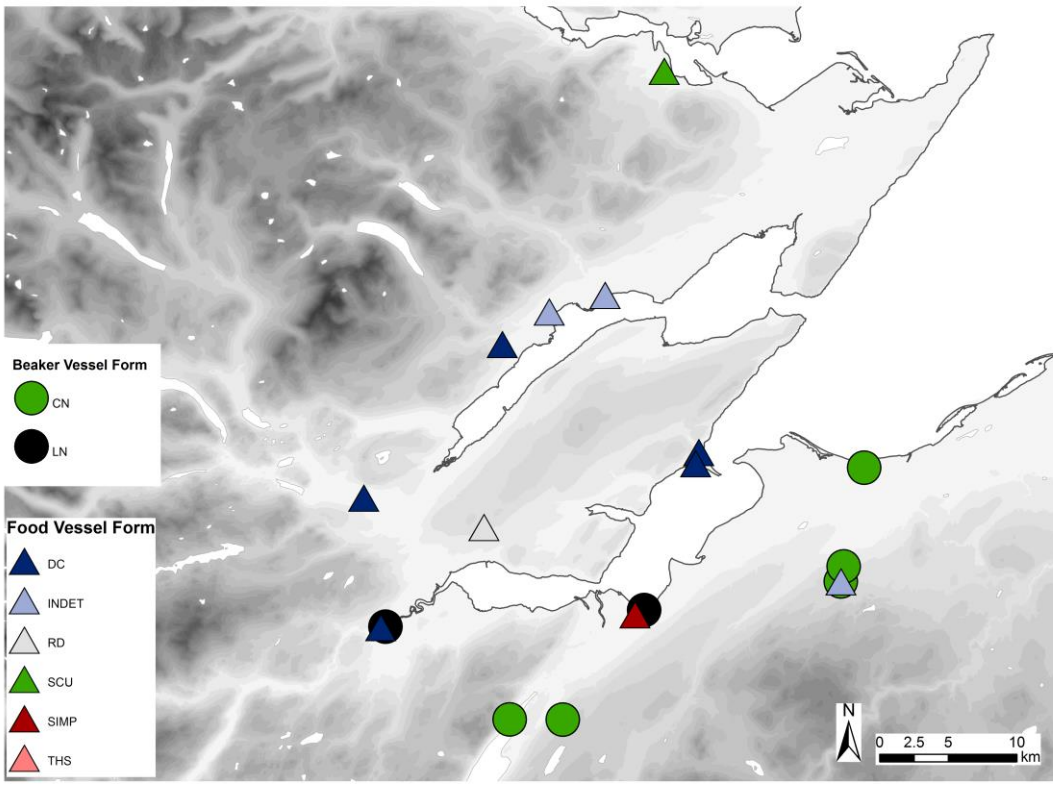

Figure 9.61: *Distribution of cupped and long-necked Beakers in relation to Food Vessels in the South Highlands:*

Key: *Beaker forms:* ***CN.*** *Cupped-necked,* ***LN.*** *Long-necked*

Key: *Food Vessel forms:* ***DC.*** *Double cavetto,* ***INDET.*** *Indeterminate,* ***RD.*** *Ridged,* ***SCU.*** *Single upper-cavetto,* ***SIMP.*** *Simple,* ***THS.*** *Tall high-shouldered*

were, where information was available, associated with young-mid adults. This recalls a similar pattern of association recorded by Curtis and Wilkin where basic s-profile Beakers are associated with young adults (2016: 39). Comparative information for short-necked Beakers is lacking so it is not possible to state whether short-necked vessels were associated with different age categories (*cf.* **Chapter 11**).

In contrast to the North Highlands later Beaker forms, primarily cupped and long-necked forms were recorded from the region. These were primarily recorded from Nairn including several examples from Auchindown (Table 9.6). Examples were recorded from Skye as well. These vessels likely fall post 2200 cal BC, as suggested by dates from the study area and other parts of Scotland (Wilkin 2011b: 30). Further to this long and cupped-necked Beakers occur in areas with low or no Food Vessel use, although they are recorded together in at least two cases at cemetery sites (see below) (Fig. 9.57). As discussed in **Chapter 4** these are defined

by their elongate necks or cupped like mouths. Cupped-necked vessels in comparison to long-necked vessels tended to be larger occupying a size range of 160-209mm, while the latter typically ranged from 140-203mm tall. Long-necked Beakers, except for the vessel from Coille Grulla (SH15), were typically decorated in narrow bands of simple geometric motifs. Cupped-necked vessels were similarly decorated, but again within Skye more complex geometric motifs were used. These include similar geometric motifs on the sherds from Elishader (SH26), setting the decorative repertoire of Skye apart from that found to the east.

Food Vessels

Food Vessels were recorded primarily from funerary sites, but at Rudh an Dunain (SH47) possible Food Vessel sherds were recorded. As noted above Food Vessels occur primarily in areas of low Beaker use, although there is a degree of overlap in Skye. Food Vessels are found primarily north of the Beauly Firth (Fig. 9.38). This can be contrasted with areas south of the Beauly Firth which employ late Beaker types. Food Vessels are found alongside Beakers at the cemetery sites of Seafield West (SH48) and Auchindown (SH5). At Seafield West (SH48) a single Food Vessel bowl was recorded, the form of which alongside other aspects of the cemetery suggest links with Ireland. Parallels can be drawn between SF11 at Armadale (SH4) and other vases found in Scotland and Ireland. These links can be detected in other parts of the region, including at Culduthel Mains (SH18), where isotopic evidence suggests the individual came from Ireland (Sheridan 2012b: 38). Given the general lack of dates the possibility of late short-necked or s-profile Beakers in the region cannot be ruled out. The late date for the West Torbreck (SH25) vessel reinforces such a possibility (Fig. 9.37). Aspects of chronology will be further examined in the following chapter. Food Vessels are predominantly associated with cremations. These are typically placed in short-cists, but stone-lined pits are recorded. Age and sex information was limited preventing a more detailed analysis of patterns of association.

Food Vessels were predominantly of double-cavetto form with single upper-cavetto zoned vessels making up a significant percentage of the assemblage. In terms of dimensions' vessels ranged from those with squat proportions to more elongate. Double-cavetto Food Vessels were divided into a series of further types, with vessels predominantly sporting a broad upper cavetto zone and a narrow lower zone. Within this group it was tentatively suggested there could be two distinct regional groups. Food Vessels were decorated with a diverse array of techniques including twisted cord, which was frequently combined with a

Sub-Form	Site Type	Key Characteristics	Notes
Low-carinated	Domestic Chambered cairn NF Funerary	RD: 115-280mm Height: 119-228mm Dec: Twisted Cord, Comb, Shell Fingernail impressions	Recorded from a number of settings. Vessels range from small all over cord decorated forms to larger types with sub rim cordons and mixed modes of decoration (*e.g.* Kilcoy South (SH34)
S-profile	Domestic Funerary	RD: 98-140mm Height: 120-205mm Dec: Incision, comb	Decoration typically arranged in arranged in 3-4 zones. Metope panels are noted on several examples
Tall short-necked	Funerary	RD: 127-155mm Height: 226-228mm Dec: Incision, comb	Decoration typically arranged in arranged in 3-4 zones
Short-necked	Funerary	RD: 84-151mm Height: 84-165mm Dec: Incision, comb	Decoration typically arranged in 3 zones
Cupped-necked	Funerary	RD: 134-158mm Height: 160-209mm Dec: Incision, comb	Examples primarily recorded from Nairn
Long-necked	Funerary	RD: 102-140mm Height: 140-203mm Dec: Comb	Bulk of examples recorded from the Cawdor region

Table 9.7: *Principal Beaker forms from the South Highlands*

variety of other techniques. These include fingernail impressions and whipped cord. Double-cavetto vessels demonstrated a high degree of diversity in decorative techniques.

9.7 Summary & Conclusions

In this chapter the evidence from the final region, the South Highlands, has been reviewed. As was the case in the North Highlands sites were primarily funerary in nature. Domestic finds in contrast to the Highlands North were more common. Among the material from

Sub-Form	Site Type	Key Characteristics	Notes
Narrow upper-broad lower cavetto zone	Funerary	RD: 132mm Height: 152mm Dec: Whipped cord, other impressed decoration	Relatively shallow cavetto zones, lower zone is quite broad.
Broad upper, narrow lower cavetto zone	Funerary	RD: 125-194mm Height: 130-215mm Dec: Twisted cord, incision	Unlike the above the lower cavetto zone tends to be broader. Vessels can have squat proportions.
Double cavetto ridged/ lugged	Funerary	RD: 152mm Height: 152mm Dec: Twisted cord	Squat form, overlaps with squat narrow double cavetto zone vessels
Squat narrow double cavetto	Funerary	RD: 155mm Height: 124mm Dec: Twisted cord	Divisions between neck and body marked out by low cordons – style is reminiscent of bowls from Ireland.
Single upper-cavetto	Funerary	RD: 155-158mm Height: n/a Dec: Twisted cord, whipped cord	No height data available
High-shouldered	Funerary	RD: n/a Height: n/a Dec: Applied decoration	Style and form of vessel compares to Encrusted Urns
Simple	Funerary	RD: 98mm Height: 110mm Dec: Whipped cord	Single example from Raigmore (SH44)

Table 9.8: *Principal Food Vessel forms from the South Highlands*

domestic sites were examples of probable early Beakers. The dating of these is ambiguous, the only date deriving from Culduthel Farm (SH17). The domestic material was

reviewed in the opening half of the chapter, highlighting the highly varied nature of the material. This included the presence of distinct regional forms at Kiltaraglen (SH35). In the second part of the chapter I reviewed the abundant evidence from funerary contexts. These were primarily recovered from funerary contexts. Beakers formed the bulk of the recovered pottery from these contexts. Food Vessels were recorded primarily from Ross and Cromarty with 11 examples. In Inverness and Nairn only three Food Vessels were recorded. This as noted suggests that while Inverness, Nairn and Skye continued to employ Beakers at a late date, Ross and Cromarty like Sutherland showed an increased preference for Food Vessels, alongside a series of bucket/ tub vessels. During the early 2nd millennium these also include examples of Cordoned Urns set into pits. Contextual information overall for these burials was lacking, prohibiting a fuller understanding of the significance of differences in form and decoration. In the case of Beakers while some patterns of association could be identified these were weakly articulated. The same can be said for Food Vessels, where information regarding age and sex was lacking. This is in part due to the recurrent association of Food Vessels with cremations.

In addition to these stratified finds several assemblages of pottery were recorded from chambered cairns. These included a series of potentially early Beakers from Kilcoy South (SH34) which could equate to domestic deposits placed into the chamber. Importantly this could be cited as evidence for an early domestic use of Beakers alongside the material from Ardnamurchan (SH2, SH3) and Culduthel Farm (SH17). Alongside these known sites in the final part of the review I considered a series of sites where the evidence is more ambiguous. As with Kilcoy South (SH34) these included important early deposits of low-carinated Beakers from Elishader (SH26). The precise chronology of these sherds is unclear, and the deposits include probable later examples. Despite this, the South Highlands emerges as a key region for the initial use of Beaker pottery, continuing to play a key role in its development and dissemination throughout the 3rd millennium.